

Official Minutes and Reports
of the
20th All-American Council

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The following are the approved minutes, reports, and documents of the 20th All-American Council, convened July 18-22, 2022 at the Hilton Baltimore Inner Harbor Hotel in Baltimore, Maryland.

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Orthodox Church in America

20th All-American Council

Plenary Session I

Monday, July 18, 2022

OPENING PRAYER SERVICE AND CALL TO ORDER

The 20th All-American Council (AAC), Plenary Session I, began at 7:25 PM with an opening prayer service. After the singing of “O Heavenly King” by the Council, His Beatitude Tikhon, Archbishop of Washington, Metropolitan of All America and Canada, declared the 20th All-American Council open at 7:53 PM EDT.

APPROVAL OF CLERGY AND LAY CHAIRS AND COMMITTEES

His Beatitude asked Priest Alessandro Margheritino, Secretary of the Orthodox Church in America, to present to the assembly the appointments of Archpriest Andrew Jarmus as Clergy Vice-Chair; and Mrs. Hollie Benton as Lay Vice-Chair, Mr. Donald Garrett, MPB, PRP, as Parliamentarian, and David Lane, Esq., Metropolitan Council Legal Committee Chair. Fr. Margheritino also presented the following Committees:

SECRETARIAT

Priest Alessandro Margheritino, Stavropegial Institutions, CHAIR

Archpriest David Cowan, Diocese of New York and New Jersey

Priest Andrew Smith, Diocese of the West

Priest William Rettig, Diocese of the Midwest

Lynnell Brunswig, Diocese of the West

Philip Sokolov, Diocese of the Midwest

Alexis Liberovsky, Stavropegial Institutions

COUNCIL TELLERS

Priest Timothy Yates, Military Chaplains, CHAIR

Priest Seth Earl, Diocese of the South

Priest Jonathan Lincoln, Diocese of the Midwest

Priest Innocent Neal, Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

Sandra Tosca, Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

Tracey John Edson, Diocese of the West

Annette Miller, Diocese of the Midwest

Brian Preston, Diocese of the South

Paul Batz, Archdiocese of Canada
Kevin Fritts, Archdiocese of Washington

COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS

Archpriest Timothy Sawchak, Diocese of the Midwest, CHAIR
Archpriest Herman Kincaid, Diocese of the Midwest
Protodeacon Jesse Isaac, Archdiocese of Canada
Anna Miller, Archdiocese of Canada
Sophia Sokolov, Diocese of the West
Michael Herzak, Stavropegial Institutions
Mark Linnehan, Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania

COUNCIL PRESS & INFORMATION

Priest Kyle Parrott, Archdiocese of Canada, CHAIR
Archpriest John Parsells, Archdiocese of Washington
Priest Joseph Lucas, Diocese of the South
Priest Alexander Koranda, Diocese of the Midwest

COUNCIL CREDENTIALS

Priest John Cox, Diocese of the South, CHAIR
Archpriest Michael Myers, Bulgarian Diocese
Priest Joshua Trant, Diocese of the South
Priest Stephen Osburn, Diocese of the West
Priest Peter Runyon, Diocese of the West
Donna Dimitri, Albanian Archdiocese
Kirk Ries, Diocese of the Midwest
Barry Migyanko, Stavropegial Institutions, CONSULTANT

NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Archpriest Steven Voytovich, Diocese of New England, CHAIR
Archpriest Stephen Vernak, Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania
Priest Theophan Whitfield, Diocese of New England
Priest Andrew Nelko, Archdiocese of Western Pennsylvania

Ionut Alexandru Tudorie, Stavropegial Institutions
David Lane, Diocese of the West

Fr. Margheritino asked for and received the assembly's approval of the Council Committees by consensus.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Metropolitan Tikhon, at the request of the Pension Board, and in consultation with the Holy Synod and the Metropolitan Council, moved to amend the agenda to shift the Pension Report from Wednesday to Tuesday immediately preceding the Pension Statute Amendment. Dn. Bogdan Popescu, St John the Baptist Romanian Orthodox Church, Los Angeles, seconded the motion. The Agenda as amended was approved unanimously.

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT

Fr. Cox, committee chair, presented the following report:

Hierarchs:	13	
Clergy Delegates:	231	
Lay Delegates:	206	
Clergy Observers:	24	
Lay Observers:	83	
TOTAL:	557	(out of 692 total registrants)

WELCOME

Mrs. Benton, Lay Chair, introduced Archpriest Theodore Boback and Elizabeth Mikhalevsky, Clergy and Lay Chairs, respectively, of the Local Organizing Committee. Fr. Boback delivered welcoming remarks.

ADDRESS OF THE METROPOLITAN

His Beatitude, at the outset of his address, congratulated His Grace Bishop Daniel, formerly of Santa Rosa, on his election today by the Holy Synod as Bishop of Chicago and the Diocese of the Midwest. He spoke on the theme of this All-American Council, "Becoming Vessels of Grace," outlining his vision of church life, past, present, and future.

HOUSEKEEPING AND ADJOURNMENT

Dn. Peter Ilchuk, Council Manager, made a number of housekeeping announcements.

Mrs. Benton declared Plenary Session I concluded at 9:01pm. The Session closed with the singing of “It is Truly Meet.”

Orthodox Church in America
20th All-American Council

Plenary Session II

Tuesday, July 19, 2022

OPENING PRAYER

The session was convened at 10:44 a.m. with the singing of “O Heavenly King.”

Archpriest Andrew Jarmus, Clergy Vice Chair, asked all to keep Judge E. R. Lanier in their prayers, as he is undergoing surgery this week.

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT

Hierarchs:	12
Clergy Delegates:	260
Lay Delegates:	223
Total Voters:	495

Clergy Observers:	23
Lay Observers:	75

NOMINATING PROCEDURES

Archpriest Steven Voytovich, Chair, thanked the other committee members. Nominations were posted on the website on June 12, and are now updated with further nominations. Nominations—with Bishop’s signature—may still be submitted through Vespers tonight. He thanked all who wish to serve the Church.

RESOLUTION PROCEDURES

Archpriest Timothy Sawchak, Chair, asked that any resolutions be turned in as soon as possible. He recognized the other members of the committee. He noted that resolutions may be sent to resolutions.20aac@oca.org.

METROPOLITAN’S REPORT

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon delivered his attached report covering the following practical aspects of his primatial ministry:

1. The COVID-19 Pandemic
2. Our vacant dioceses

3. Chancery restructuring, relocation, and operations
4. Clergy health
5. External Affairs

PENSION BOARD REPORT

Mr. Barry Gluntz offered the report in place of Priest Gleb McFatter, who was unavailable due to ill health. He introduced and thanked Mr. Michael Stieglitz, the Pension Administrator. Mr. Gluntz thanked His Beatitude and the Metropolitan Council for the agenda change, which gives the Pension Board a chance to speak prior to the amendment discussion.

He acknowledged that the Pension Board and the Metropolitan Council have been struggling with communications. His Beatitude had both groups meet jointly on July 14, 2022. Many points of agreement were reached at that meeting: All agreed that the Plan should be better funded. Mr. Gluntz noted the 2% increase in January 2021. The participation mandate must be enforced by the Holy Synod and Metropolitan Council. The OCA should contribute a reasonable amount of the administrative costs of the program. Pension Board members need to be present at every regular Metropolitan Council meeting.

Mr. Gluntz noted that the Pension Plan funding levels are not where they need to be. The Market is down, so the pension fund is down. The funding levels must be increased by at least 2% as soon as we can. One reason for this is that the ratio of beneficiaries to contributors has increased. It is also important to increase participation, which is presently at 85%.

In reply to those who say we should convert the Pension Plan to a 401(k). Mr. Gluntz noted that the benefit of the Pension Plan is the brotherhood of priests all helping each other with this investment rather than having to each become a canny investor.

When the Pension Plan office moved out of the Chancery, a lot of time was spent digitizing the files, which has been a blessing. Mr. Stieglitz was largely responsible for this and for building the pension website.

Regarding the amendment, the Pension Board believes it needs to remain an autonomous body. Mr. Gluntz asserted that there is nothing in the Statute which prevents the Metropolitan Council from vetting prospective Pension Board members and presenting them for election at the All-American Council.

DISCUSSION

Joshua Godbold, Holy Transfiguration Church, Raleigh, NC and Metropolitan Council member: The actuarial value of benefits promised is \$55 million. But you just told us you have \$24 million in assets.

We are about \$30 million in debt. That's \$60,000 per parish. The Board states that the solution to make up the deficit is to increase participation.

Mr. Gluntz explained that these amounts describe termination funding; long-term funding ratio is closer to 77%.

Robert Graban, Holy Transfiguration Church, Livonia, MI and Metropolitan Council member: Thanked Barry for a good straightforward report. The report in the Delegate Handbook states that the Pension is healthy and strong. Why does the report not mention that at least a 2% increase of the employer portion will be needed to make up the deficit?

Mr. Gluntz: Our report goes to the end of the year and we try to do our metrics at that point rather than continually updating them. Markets dip and rebound.

Mark Linnehan, Holy Apostles Church, Mechanicsburg, PA, Metropolitan Council member, and Treasurer of the Diocese of Eastern PA: Please explain the difference between terminal funding (40%) and operational funding (77%).

Mr. Gluntz: The actuaries look at our aging population. The baby boomers are retiring. This has given rise to having more benefits to pay out than contributions coming in. The terminal rate means if the program would end today, the plan would only pay beneficiaries 40% of the benefits for the remainder of their life. The operational level is a projection based on the present rate of growth.

Mr. Stieglitz: Our termination rate is in line with other church and nonprofit plans of similar size. And our operational funding rate is sufficient to pay benefits for 20 to 25 years.

His Eminence, Archbishop Mark: Operational funding is based on projections that contain many variables — such as speculation and the assumption that things will remain the same. With the fund being down 18%, it will take a while to dig out of the hole.

Mr. Gluntz: It is true that there is data we don't have. Many parishes are aging. The Dioceses of the West and South are on a growth trajectory. We need these younger parishes which are going to be participating for a long time. He reiterated that everyone must participate in the plan and that many problems have been created by lower participation in the past and by clergy joining the program later in their careers.

STATUTE AMENDMENT: PENSION PLAN

Mrs. Hollie Benton, Lay Vice Chair, reviewed *The Statute of the Orthodox Church in America*, Article XVII, regarding Statute amendments.

Mr. Andrew Smith, OCA Treasurer, presented the Statute amendment regarding the Pension Board. In 2020, many questions arose across the OCA regarding the health of the Pension Plan. It has been on a path of steady decline for two decades, and on the current path, the deficit is projected to grow, but it can be corrected and restored to health.

Mr. Smith reviewed the process of arriving at this amendment. Three elements were identified as the reason for the decline: investment performance, demographics, and plan structure.

Mr. Smith stated that whereas the funded status is presently 76%, a reasonable goal is 100%; and the funding ratio is 48.8%; but a reasonable goal would be at 65% - 80%.

Mr. Smith asserted that information needs to be regularly reported by the Pension Board to the Metropolitan Council. But more importantly there needs to be a real sense of urgency. Finally, there must be a wider range of solutions for the sake of long-term viability.

He outlined three goals of the Amendment:

1. to codify basic reporting expectations of the Pension Board,
2. to give oversight of the Pension Plan statements to the OCA Auditing Committee, and,
3. to change the composition of the Pension Board to make for more direct representation of the key constituents, plan participants, and employers.

It was felt that “independence” was a more appropriate word than “autonomy” since the Metropolitan Council does have oversight.

DISCUSSION

The Lay Vice Chair introduced the proposed amendment and the period of deliberation as outlined in the Delegate Handbook.

Proponent: Priest John Cox, Holy Ascension Church, Mount Pleasant, SC: The amendment is based on sound theological principles—*sobornost*'. Raising percentages will not address the fundamental problem of low salaries.

Opponent: Priest Michael Rozdilski, Holy Apostles Church, Vancouver, WA: Expressed greater confidence in an independent Pension Board. Did not believe that changing the composition of the Board would change anything.

Proponent: Mr. Graban: Financial advisors state that one should plan to live to 95 years old. It has been difficult to get Pension Board members to come in and give a report other than a snapshot in time of the fund. Too often they have been no-shows, and we have had to pry the information from them.

Opponent: Archpriest Emilian Hutnyan, St. Andrew Church, Maple Heights, OH: How does changing the method of selecting board members solve the funding of the plan?

Proponent: Archpriest John Hopko, SS. Cyril and Methodius Church, Terryville, CT: I left the Kondratich Chancery due to misdeeds. The present primate and chancery is not the same — competent and honest. Mr. Smith's report was much more articulate and prepared than the Pension Board's report.

Neutral: Priest James Parnell, Military Chaplain: When will the mandate be enforced? All clergy and lay employees should participate.

Opponent: Priest Stephen Osburn, St Mary's Holy Dormition Church, Calhan, CO: Why not dissolve the Pension Fund entirely and return the money to the parishes so they can make their own retirement plans?

Proponent: Mr. Eldred Brown, St. Nicholas Church, Portland, OR: In a crisis situation, more accountability to a central authority is appropriate.

Neutral: Priest Nikolai Breckenridge, St. Nicholas Church, Bethlehem, PA: The Pension Plan has 91% participation among the territorial dioceses. Are extraterritorial dioceses bound to the mandate?

Opponent: Archpriest John Dresko, retired: This seems to be "a solution looking for a problem." It pains me to hear "we" and "they" (Pension Board and Metropolitan Council). I agree our Metropolitan and administration are trustworthy. But there is no guarantee that they will be here a year from now. The market is down 20% but the pension plan is down ONLY 18%. This was stated by both Mr. Gluntz and Mr. Smith. I have great confidence in Mr. Stieglitz.

Proponent: Mr. Ray Steeb, St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, Allison Park, PA and Metropolitan Council member: Things need to change. The Pension Board seems unaware of the demographics in the Church. It takes years for them to deliver information to the Metropolitan Council.

Opponent: Archpriest Joseph Lickwar, SS. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Jersey City, NJ: The issues are already known by the Pension Board.

Proponent: Ms. Maureen Jury, St. Seraphim Cathedral, Dallas, TX: How many AAC delegates read the curriculum vitae of all Pension Board nominees? This is a crucial time for the health of the Pension Fund. The decisions need to be made by those who give the most serious consideration to the issue.

Opponent: Mr. Joseph Pecevich, St. Mark of Ephesus Mission, Kingston, MA: How is the election going to be conducted? Is there going to be a slate presented to the Pension participants? Or individual candidates? Who is in the pool of candidates—are there restrictions? It is not clear how this will result in an improvement.

Proponent: Ms. Donna Dimitri, St. John Chrysostom Church, Philadelphia, PA and Metropolitan Council member: Why wouldn't Pension participants want to be able to pick their own representatives?

Opponent: Pdn. Peter Danilchick, Protection of the Holy Mother of God Church, Falls Church, VA: This is an "omnibus bill." The Corporate Finance Institute states that an effective trustee will act impartially to represent all stakeholders in the plan, and to treat with caution trustees who are appointed by the plan's sponsor. Parishes should be represented, since they are major contributors to the plan. The AAC is where they may be represented.

Proponent: Archpriest Joseph Ciarciaglini, St. Philip the Apostle Mission, Tampa, FL and Metropolitan Council member: The OCA has an interest and should have a seat at the table. A \$25 million debt will not disappear; it will fall on the OCA.

Opponent: Archpriest David Garretson, SS. Peter and Paul Church, South River, NJ: This Statute amendment does not solve the problem. This is a complex problem and does not have a simple solution.

Neutral: Mr. Jason Homiak, SS. Peter and Paul Church, Burr Ridge, IL: Saddened that there are two lines, "for" and "against." If this amendment does not pass, will a middle-ground be considered? Will there be a follow-up amendment? Ms. Benton clarified that there would not.

Proponent: Matushka Evelyn Kreta, Metropolitan Council member: She expressed that the Metropolitan Council cares deeply about all delegates and has been extremely diligent in coming up with this amendment.

Opponent: Mr. Mark Linnehan, Holy Apostles Church, Mechanicsburg, PA and Metropolitan Council member: Agrees with Mr. Smith regarding the three problems — plan structure, performance, and demographics. Some say we should replace the actuary, the financial advisors, and/or the leadership. Statutes are to protect us from "nefarious" leadership that may exist in the future; not a statement of mistrust for current trustworthy leadership.

Neutral: Mr. Kurt Ries, St. Innocent Church, Olmsted Falls, OH: Would it be possible to hold two separate votes on two separate issues? Ms. Benton clarified that it would not. This same question was later raised by Archpriest Steven Voytovich, Holy Transfiguration Church, New Haven, CT (to the same result).

Proponent: Mr. Godbold: Doing the same thing over again will get you the same results. Right now if something goes wrong, each parish is liable for \$60,000. It could get worse. The Pension Board needs to be professional and responsive to the body that is financially responsible. It needs better-picked leadership. We have been told over the years that everything is fine. And we have had to fight tooth and nail to get this information. This has been a Kondratich-level scandal. We can "right the ship" now.

Opponent: Priest Matthew Brown, St. Mary Magdalen Church, New York, NY: This amendment tacitly states that the AAC is not fully competent to select members of the Pension Board.

Fr. Parnell: Can the actual change to the Statute be read?

Fr. Garretson: Point of Order: How did the amendment arrive on the floor? Who made the motion?

Ms. Benton clarified that the Metropolitan Council proposed it. The Council Parliamentarian, Mr. Donald Garrett, further clarified that when a board or committee brings a proposal to the floor, it is inherent that there is a mover and a seconder. No further motion is necessary. Since the Council adopted the Agenda, this was the time and place for discussion on the amendment.

Mr. Smith reviewed the Statute change.

Dn. Matthew Prentice, St. Mark Church, Bethesda, MD and Metropolitan Council member: Asked how many votes are necessary to reach two-thirds. Mr. Garrett clarified that, per the Statute, it is two-thirds of those present and voting. Therefore, that number can only be determined after the vote has been taken.

Results: 266 in favor and 209 against, for a total of 475 votes. The amendment failed.

HOUSEKEEPING

Dn. Peter Ilchuk gave some housekeeping announcements. The session was adjourned at 1:59 p.m. with the singing of "It Is Truly Meet."

Orthodox Church in America

20th All-American Council

Plenary Session III

Wednesday, July 20, 2022

The session was convened at 10:37 a.m. with the singing of “The Grace of the Holy Spirit.”

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT

Hierarchs:	13
Clergy Delegates:	249
Lay Delegates:	219
Total Voters:	481

Clergy Observers:	24
Lay Observers:	61

METROPOLITAN’S REMARKS

His Beatitude Tikhon, Archbishop of Washington, Metropolitan of All America and Canada, thanked the council for the discussion yesterday regarding clergy health and other issues. He expressed his disappointment with the results of the vote on the proposed Pension Plan amendment to the Statute. Urgent action does need to be taken to ensure the sustainability of the plan. Our responsibility is to ensure that the plan not only works today, but that it works for the priests who are joining today. His office will take all measures necessary to ensure the long-term health of the plan. While the proposed amendment did not reach the two-thirds vote necessary to pass, 57% nonetheless voted in favor of it—a sign that the Church is looking for a change.

The Metropolitan Council, elected by the AAC and the dioceses, is, according to the Statute, the permanent extension of the All-American Council, and will continue consideration of this matter.

He himself will examine the issue of less than 100 percent compliance with mandated participation in the Pension Plan. Participating in the Pension Plan speaks to humility, obedience, and mutual care.

He expressed thanks to Mr. Andrew Smith for analyzing the state of the Plan and exploring solutions.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Archpriest Andrew Jarmus, Clergy Vice Chair, announced that the Holy Synod has approved the minutes from Plenary Sessions I and II.

CHANCERY STATUTE AMENDMENT

Archpriest Timothy Hojnicky described the work of the Chancery Restructuring Task Force, consisting of His Grace Bishop Daniel, Archpriest Alexander Rentel, Archpriest John Dresko, Lisa Mikhalevsky, and Archpriest Timothy Hojnicky. The current Statute (Section VI.1) places the Chancellor, Secretary, and Treasurer on an equal plane reporting directly to the Metropolitan. The purpose of the Amendment is to codify the new “structural flow chart” in the Statute (see full text of the amendment in the Delegate Handbook).

Archpriest Thomas Moore moved for acceptance of the amendment as presented. Priest Nicholas Finley, Nativity of the Virgin Mary Church, Madison, IL, seconded.

DISCUSSION

Proponent: Archpriest Dennis Buck, St. Catherine the Great Martyr Church, Hagerstown, MD: This structure relieves His Beatitude of certain direct responsibilities to free him up to focus on his archpastoral ministry as Archbishop of Washington. He urged his fellow diocesan colleagues to vote in favor of this amendment.

Archpriest Alexander Vallens, St. Tikhon Mission, Parker, CO: Point of clarification. It has been standard in non-profits to separate Treasurer and Controller – why was that not done here? Mr. Andrew Smith responded that, in present practice, we have an Accounting Manager who functions much like a daily controller, whereas Mr. Smith’s own role is much like a CFO—oversight and strategy. The proposed amendment allows us flexibility to move back and forth between responsibilities.

Fr. Jarmus called the vote to question. The proposed amendment passed overwhelmingly adopted as follows:

Article VI, Section 1 - Church Officers

The Church Officers shall be a Chancellor, a Treasurer, and a Secretary. Church Officers assist the Metropolitan and the Holy Synod in the administration of the Church and work with the Metropolitan Council in carrying out its particular competence. The Chancellor, Treasurer, and Secretary, together with the Metropolitan, also serve as corporate officers of the Church. Those holding additional positions may be designated as Church Officers by the Holy Synod and the Metropolitan Council, as needed.

The Secretary and the Treasurer work under the direct supervision of the Chancellor and report to him, the Holy Synod, and the Metropolitan Council. The Chancellor works under the direct supervision of the Metropolitan and reports to him, the Holy Synod, and the Metropolitan Council. All three officers are ex officio members of the Metropolitan Council.

CHANCELLOR'S REPORT

Archpriest Alexander Rentel, OCA Chancellor since January 1, 2019, noted that his official report is available and stands as written. He highlighted two areas: the transition to a hybrid in-person and remote work environment, and the relocation of the Chancery of the Orthodox Church in America. Fr. Rentel introduced Mr. Gregory Honshul and Mr. Ray Steeb to discuss the Chancery Relocation on behalf of the Metropolitan Council (see slide presentation), and who outlined the stages undertaken in the process.

Stage 1: Relocation of His Beatitude and staff and identifying temporary Chancery headquarters

Stage 2: Find permanent location for the Chancery

The report continued with the planned disposition of the Westwood property, as the site of the Syosset Chancery is officially called (see additional slide presentation). Two offers are presently under review.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Priest Alessandro Margheritino, OCA Secretary, presented his written report, in which he introduced his work as Secretary and expressed his gratitude for being asked to serve in this new capacity. He highlighted the work of the relocation of the Archives to St. Vladimir's Seminary (SVS) and offered this update:

Over the last couple of months, a memorandum of understanding for the relocation of the archives has been drafted. The document was approved and signed by both parties. The OCA Archives will be housed by SVS starting in Fall 2022, but the OCA will retain ownership.

The Archives Commission will be comprised of:

OCA Secretary

One appointment by the Metropolitan

The academic dean of SVS

One appointment by SVS

The OCA Secretary will offer semi-annual reports to the Metropolitan Council and the Holy Synod.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Mr. Andrew Smith, Treasurer, presented highlights from his attached report.

INTERNAL AUDITING COMMITTEE REPORT

Mka. Sharon Hubiak, Chair, gave the Auditing Committee Report (see report).

PROPOSED FUNDING RESOLUTION

Treasurer Andrew Smith presented the proposed funding resolution (see slide).

DISCUSSION:

QUESTION: Protodeacon Peter Danilchick, Protection of the Holy Mother of God Church, Falls Church, VA, asked if each of the territorial Dioceses has given their assent to the funding resolution. Mr. Smith: It has been discussed with Diocesan Chancellors and Treasurers.

QUESTION: Priest David Gresham, Holy Apostles Church, Bloomington, IL: Why is the Diocese of Mexico not in the contribution breakdown? Answer: The OCA does not receive funding from Mexico.

The Resolution passed by majority vote as follows:

For the budget years of 2023, 2024, and 2025 each territorial diocese with the exception of Canada, Mexico and Alaska shall remit its annual financial obligation for the work of the Synodal Chancery according to the following formula:

Dioceses contributing at a rate greater than 34% of their current year “net operating budgets” shall remit 38% of their “budgeted net operating revenue” in 2023, 36% in 2024 and 34% in 2025, decreasing their annual diocesan financial contribution 2% per year, not to fall below 34%.

Dioceses contributing at the 34% rate of their current year “net operating budgets” shall continue to remit their annual financial obligation at the 34% of “budgeted net operating revenue” from 2023 through 2025.

For the budget years 2023 through 2025, the Archdiocese of Canada and the Diocese of Alaska shall remit their annual diocesan financial obligation at the rate of 10% of their current year “budgeted net operating revenue”.

The financial arrangements of the non-territorial dioceses (Romanian Episcopate, Albanian Archdiocese, and Bulgarian Diocese) are based upon agreements made when they entered the OCA and are within the competency of the Holy Synod, subject to periodic review.

“Budgeted net operating revenue” is defined as all revenue budgeted for the current year by the diocese, with the exception of pass-through activity that benefits a third party or funds a special initiative (e.g. scholarship funds, capital campaigns, revenue or expenses associated with donor-restricted funds unless the restriction is for operations).”

STAVROPEGIAL MONASTERIES REPORT

Abbot Sergius (Bowyer) gave the attached report on St. Tikhon's Monastery.

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION

Archpriest Paul Jannakos, St. Luke the Evangelist Church, Palos Hills, IL, Chancellor, Diocese of the Midwest, requested clarification from the Treasurer regarding the \$1.5 million in undesignated operating funds: Could the difference between that amount and the six-month cushion be offered as a one-time donation to the OCA Pension Plan?

Mrs. Trudy Ellmore, Church of the Holy Cross, Medford, NJ: Question for the Treasurer regarding endowment funds – could a portion of the 3% spending rate go to the Diocese of Alaska to kickstart its Clergy Endowment? Answer: Most of the money in the endowment fund is purpose restricted already, but we can review the unrestricted portion to see if it can be designated. Three percent of the entire endowment is roughly \$60K, so this does not represent a large sum.

METROPOLITAN'S REMARKS

His Beatitude noted that there will be two fora this afternoon; one on the Diocese of Mexico and the other on additions. He encouraged attendees to participate and to consider ways to support the Dioceses of Alaska and Mexico.

HOUSEKEEPING

Dn. Peter Ilchuk noted that nominations to Church-wide positions are closed.

The session was adjourned at 12:46 p.m. with the singing of "It Is Truly Meet."

Plenary Session IV

Thursday, July 21, 2022

The Session opened at 1:09 p.m. with the singing of “The Grace of the Holy Spirit.”

It was announced that the Minutes of Plenary Session III have been approved by the Holy Synod.

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT

Registration at the Council:

Hierarchs:	13
Clergy Delegates:	277
Lay Delegates:	232
Total Voters:	522

Clergy Observers:	27
Lay Observers:	100
Single Day Observers:	16
Invited Guests:	4

Total Registration:	669
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Present at this Session:

Hierarchs:	13
Clergy Delegates:	235
Lay Delegates:	212

Total Voters:	460
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Clergy Observers:	17
Lay Observers:	63

Total Present:	540
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METROPOLITAN'S REMARKS

His Beatitude, Tikhon, Archbishop of Washington, Metropolitan of All America and Canada, spoke in favor of the plan of His Grace Bishop Alexei to establish a fund for Alaskan clergy. He noted that if each parish of the OCA were to give \$100 per month for two years, it would establish a \$1 million fund, which

would then be able to supplement clergy salaries by \$80 per month. His Beatitude personally pledged \$10,000 per year for the next ten years.

He also hoped all parishes would contribute toward the \$80,000 needed to build the St. Basil Academy in the Diocese of Mexico. He personally pledged \$10,000 per year for the next 10 years to this Diocese, the first three years to go toward St. Basil Academy.

STATEMENT OF THE HOLY SYNOD ON SAME-SEX RELATIONSHIPS AND SEXUAL IDENTITY

His Eminence, Archbishop Michael, Diocese of New York and New Jersey, Secretary of the Holy Synod, read the following statement on behalf of the Holy Synod:

There was a resolution proposed to affirm the Church's stance on issues of same-sex relationships and sexual identity. This matter, however, falls outside the competence of the All-American Council, since, in the words of the *Statute of the Orthodox Church in America*, "All matters involving doctrine, canonical order, morals, and liturgical practice" are within the competence and jurisdiction of the Holy Synod. Nevertheless, meeting under the presidency of His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon, the Holy Synod has issued the following statement:

The Orthodox Church teaches that the union between a man and a woman in marriage reflects the union between Christ and His Church (Eph. 5). As such, marriage is by this reflection monogamous and heterosexual. Within this marriage, sexual relations between a husband and wife are an expression of their love that has been blessed by God. Such is God's plan for male and female, created in his image and likeness, from the beginning, and such remains His plan for all time. Any other form of sexual expression is by its nature disordered, and cannot be blessed by the Church in any way, whether directly or indirectly.

That said, the Holy Synod of Bishops expresses its pastoral concern and paternal love for all who desire to come to Christ and who struggle with their passions, temptations, and besetting sins, whatever those might be. The Church is a hospital for the sick; our Lord has come as a physician to heal those who are ailing. Imitating our Savior, who stretched His arms wide on the Cross, we welcome with open arms all who desire the life of repentance in Christ.

Over the course of recent years, His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon and the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America have made numerous pronouncements affirming the Orthodox Christian teaching on marriage and sexuality. Metropolitan Tikhon, at the 18th All-American Council in Atlanta, Georgia, on July 20, 2015, in his opening address, stated that:

"... the Orthodox Church must continue to proclaim what she has always taught: that marriage is the union between one man and one woman and the Orthodox Church in America can in no way deviate from this teaching..."

Among the Holy Synod's affirmations of the same teaching are the "Synodal Affirmations on Marriage, Family, Sexuality, and the Sanctity of Life," from the 10th All-American Council, Miami, Florida, taking place from July 26-31, 1992; the "Synodal Reaffirmation of the SCOBA statement titled 'On the Moral Crisis in our Nation,'" issued May 17, 2004; and the synodal "Statement concerning the June 26 US Supreme Court decision," issued June 28, 2015.

Therefore, in accord with the timeless plan of God our Creator, the unchanging teaching of Christ the Savior announced through His holy apostles and their successors, and the consistent witness of the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America, the Holy Synod affirms what the Scriptures clearly and plainly proclaim and the Holy Fathers unerringly confess, namely: that God made human beings in two sexes, male and female, in His own image, and that chaste and pure sexual relationships are reserved to one man and one woman in the bond of marriage.

As such, we affirm that sexual relationships are blessed only within the context of a marriage between one man and one woman. Motivated by love and out of sincere care for souls, we call those who suffer from the passion of same-sex attraction to a life of steadfast chastity and repentance, the same life of chastity and repentance to which all mankind is called in Christ.

We call upon all clergy, theologians, teachers, and lay persons within the Orthodox Church in America never to contradict these teachings by preaching or teaching against the Church's clear moral position; by publishing books, magazines, and articles which do the same; or producing or publishing similar content online. We reject any attempt to create a theological framework which would normalize same-sex erotic relationships or distort humanity's God-given sexual identity. The holy apostle Paul writes that such teachings will "increase to more ungodliness," and that such a "message will spread like gangrene" (2 Tim 2:16-17), misleading the faithful and inquirers seeking the truth.

Any clergy, theologian, teacher, or lay person who contravenes our directive thus undermines the authority of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America by disregarding the Holy Synod's consistent and unwavering teaching on these matters. We call on any such persons to cease their disruptive activities, which threaten the peace and tranquility of the Orthodox Church in America, cause scandal and uncertainty, and tempt those who struggle against their disordered passions to stumble. Consequently, those who teach these errors become participants in the sin of those whom they have tempted or whom they have failed to correct, and thus should seek remission of this sin in the Mystery of Holy Confession. Those who refuse correction open themselves to ecclesiastical discipline.

Thus, we, the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in Americas, conclude by once again affirming that all clergy, theologians, teachers, and lay persons of the Orthodox Church in America should teach nothing other than the fullness of the Orthodox Faith, which is the fullness of the saving truth.

We remind our faithful and clergy that every person of goodwill is welcome to visit our parishes. However, reception into the Church, and continued communion in Christ at the sacred Chalice, is reserved for those who strive to live a life of repentance and humility in light of these God-given truths, conforming themselves to the commandments of God as the only path of salvation in Christ. All of us are sinners, but it is for precisely this reason that our Lord Jesus Christ calls us to “Repent and believe in the Gospel, for the kingdom of God is at hand” (Mk. 1:15).

ELECTIONS PROCEDURES

Priest Timothy Yates outlined elections procedures.

Delegates are to vote for up to four (4) clergy delegates and four (4) lay delegates for the Metropolitan Council.

Delegates are to vote for up to three (3) clergy delegates and three (3) lay delegates for the Pension Board.

When a ballot is complete, delegates are to fold it in half for collection.

Question: Priest Gabriel Bilas, St. Mary Magdalene Church, Fenton, MI: Is it possible to find out who the incumbents are? Answer: That information is on www.OCA.org.

Deacon Matthew Prentice, Metropolitan Council: Who is remaining on the Pension Board and not up for re-election? Priest Alessandro Margheritino responded that Archpriest Matthew Tate and Mary Ann Bobulsky are staying on.

Priest Jacob Van Sickle, Protection of the Virgin Mary Church, Merrillville, IN and Mrs. Maureen Jury, St. Seraphim of Sarov Cathedral, Dallas, TX: There are names of candidates that were on the website that are not on the ballot. Is there an explanation for this? Answer: Priest Jason Foster withdrew his name from consideration, and Mrs. Diane Dorogy was found to be ineligible, being registered as an observer and not a delegate.

Deacon Stefan Glomazić, St. Luke Church, McLean, VA: Is there a way to find out which nominations have been approved by the Metropolitan or the Synod? Answer: each has received the blessing of their diocesan hierarch; there is no formal vetting process.

OCA DEPARTMENTS REPORT

Archpriest Thomas Soroka delivered the Departments Report (*see attached report and slides*)

Fr. Soroka began by delivering a brief history of the departments of the OCA (since the 1970s). He acknowledged the work of Archpriest John Matusiak (of blessed memory), David Drillock, Donna Karabin, and Mka. Valerie Zahirsky, among many other stalwarts.

He commented on the search for a Youth Director for the Youth Department. At the 19th AAC many financial pledges were made to fund a full time OCA youth director. A survey was done in 2019 and analyzed by the Holy Synod at the Fall meeting of 2021. The OCA is finally very close to hiring a national youth director.

Presently in production is a new adult catechism created by authors, teachers, and theologians from within the OCA. There will be a textbook, notebook, manual, and resource site. The goal is to have this project edited by theologians and approved by the Holy Synod by December 2022.

IOCC REPORT

Mr. Constantine Triantafilou, Executive Director and CEO of IOCC, spoke on the history and current initiatives of IOCC, marking 30 years of service. (*see slides and video*)

After his presentation, Mr. Triantafilou expressed his personal gratitude to Protopresbyter Leonid Kishkovsky of blessed memory for his many years of guidance and friendship.

RESOLUTIONS

Archpriest Timothy Sawchak presented two resolutions brought before the Council.

RESOLUTION 1

Whereas Alaska is the cradle of Orthodoxy in America: Be it resolved that the 20th AAC asks the Holy Synod of Bishops to designate annually the Sunday closest to the December feast of St. Herman, for a free-will collection from each parish in the Orthodox Church in America to support the Diocese of Alaska Clergy Endowment.

Priest Photios Avant, St. Sava Church, Plano, TX seconded.

DISCUSSION

Proponent: Archpriest Nikolay Miletkov, All Saints of North America Church, Albuquerque, NM: As Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann of blessed memory taught, “anyone capable of thanksgiving is capable of salvation and eternal joy.” This is about thanksgiving. Without Alaska we would not be here today.

The Clergy Vice-Chair called the question. The Resolution was carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION 2

The 20th All-American Council:

- *Expresses support for the statements by His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon and the Holy Synod condemning the aggression against Ukraine;*
- *Expresses support for His Beatitude Metropolitan Onuphry of Kyiv and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church;*
- *Condemns the attacks upon parishes, monasteries, and temples whether by military action, seizure by other religious groups, or pressure and interference by civil authorities or occupying forces; and*
- *Remembers with love the visit of His Beatitude Metropolitan Onuphry to the 18th All-American Council in Atlanta.*

Archpriest Timothy Hojnicky, Holy Apostles Church, Mechanicsburg, PA, seconded.

DISCUSSION

Opponent: Mr. Joseph Pecevich, St. Mark of Ephesus Church, Kingston, MA: In speaking of the aggression against Ukraine, the resolution implies that there is a guilty party. However, there are multiple guilty parties.

Proponent: Archpriest David Garretson, SS. Peter and Paul Church, South River, NJ: This is a pastoral decision and resolution. The pronouncements of His Beatitude and the Synod to date on the Ukraine crisis have helped keep parishes together.

Proponent: Archpriest Yousuf Rassam, St. Innocent Church, Tarzana, CA: The terms aggression against Ukraine are intended to mean that this began with the Russian Federation attacking the country of Ukraine. We are not commenting politically, simply stating where this all began. Great deal of this concerns the beleaguered Ukrainian Orthodox Church with which we are still in communion. Most of the violence against churches are against Metropolitan Onuphry's parishes.

Neutral: Mr. Christopher Yanovich, Holy Resurrection Wilkes-Barre, PA: Language does seem like it's assigning guilt.

Proponent: Archpriest Volodymyr Zablotsky, Holy Trinity Church, Yonkers, NY: This resolution is personal to me because I called my mother in March to wish her a happy birthday and she was hiding in a bomb shelter. The first three petitions of the Divine Liturgy begin with prayers for peace; we refer to peace 48 times in the Liturgy. I urge everyone to vote for this resolution.

Neutral: Priest David Gresham, Holy Apostles Church, Bloomington, IL: Read statement of Holy Synod on Ukraine so that we know the content of the statement referred to in the resolution.

Proponent: Archpriest Michael Meerson, Christ the Saviour Church, New York, NY: This is not a political resolution, but a Church resolution. The Church in Ukraine is squeezed between two sides (Constantinople and Moscow). We extend our hand of support.

Opponent: Deacon Stefan Glomazić, St. Luke Church, McLean, VA: The war is a tragedy on all sides. Any notion of blame distracts from the full appreciation of the tragedy that has been inflicted upon many people. The special prayers in our services are sufficient.

AMENDMENT

Mka. Sandee Buchman, St. John the Merciful Church, Kissimmee, FL: Unfortunately, innocents are being targeted in Ukraine. We need to stand up for innocents as well, who don't have a voice. We need to make the resolution broader. After "parishes, monasteries and temples," add "hospitals", i.e., "...condemns attacks upon innocent civilian populations, parishes, monasteries, temples, and hospitals."

Mr. Pecevich seconded the amendment and offered a point of order to suggest the word "all" before "attacks": "[The All-American Council] Condemns all attacks upon innocent civilian populations, parishes, monasteries, temples, and hospitals".

Point of Order: Fr. Garretson asks if the amendment can be disregarded, as all resolutions are vetted by the Holy Synod in advance. The Clergy Vice-Chair, after consulting with His Beatitude, responded that amendments are allowed

DISCUSSION ON THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT

Opponent: Priest John Kotalik, St. John the Baptist Church, Canonsburg, PA: The first paragraph already condemns all aggression against Ukraine. The second part of the resolution is all about religious freedom. This amendment confuses the flow of the resolution. Hopefully we can pass the resolution as originally submitted and approved by the Holy Synod.

Point of Order: Priest Nikolai Breckenridge, St. Nicholas Church, Bethlehem, PA: Was there a second?
Answer: yes.

Proponent: Mr. Pecevich: There is a supposition being made that all the aggression is against one Church and one group of people, but all sides are suffering; the amendment to the resolution should be broadened to reflect this.

Opponent: Fr. Breckenridge: Adding more groups to this statement actually increases the political nature of the resolution. We are focusing this on support for Metropolitan Onuphry, I believe it should remain as is.

Question: Mr. Artem Zinin, Nativity of the Holy Virgin Church, Menlo Park, CA: Is the resolution as the text appears going to be posted? Answer: It will be posted as part of official minutes and therefore will become a public statement.

The Clergy Vice-Chair called the question on the proposed amendment. The amendment failed.

The Clergy Vice-Chair called the question on the resolution as originally proposed. It was carried nearly unanimously.

ST. VLADIMIR'S ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY REPORT

Archpriest Chad Hatfield, President, began with a video presentation. He added the following points to the Seminary's written report (*see reports book*). Fr. Hatfield announced that he received word that SVS received a million dollar Phase Two "Pathways for Tomorrow" grant from Lilly Endowment. The Seminary also received a \$36,300 Compelling Preaching Initiative grant from the Lilly Endowment.

The seminary leadership has come to understand a three part formation process: academic standards, pastoral training, and spiritual formation.

SVS is committed to being strongly residential while developing hybrid forms of learning to support the Church. The challenges of the 21st Century change day by day. SVS is looking to expand, which means a change of location.

Fr. Hatfield noted that the seminary has an 'overflow house' this year and that, for the first time, SVS Press has over \$1 million in net profit.

ST. TIKHON'S ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY REPORT

In addition to his written report, Archpriest John Parker, Dean, spoke of the saints who have walked the grounds of St. Tikhon's Monastery and Seminary. He noted that nine M.Div. degrees and one pastoral certificate were awarded in May of this year. Approximately 80% of graduates become ordained, and six of the ten of this year's graduating class are now priests serving in parishes. He further invited all attendees to view the "Father Fred Challenge" video on the seminary YouTube channel.

UPDATE ON JUDGE E.R. LANIER

Fr. Garretson updated the Council on the health of Judge Lanier, who is out of surgery and doing well. Fr. Garretson asked that all refrain from calling and emailing Judge Lanier until the Feast of the Dormition.

ELECTION RESULTS

Metropolitan Council

- Clergy:
1. Archpriest Justin Patterson
 2. Archpriest Lawrence Margitich
 3. Archpriest Thomas Moore

Lay: 1. Lynnell Brunswig
 2. Elizabeth (Lisa) Mikhalevsky
 3. Alexis Liberovsky

Alternates: 1. Archpriest Christopher Foley
 2. Mka. Sarah Geana

Pension Board

Clergy: Archpriest John Dresko (6 years)
 Archpriest Chad Hatfield (3 years)
 Deacon Justin Griffing (alternate)

Lay: Melanie Ringa (6 years)
 Mka. Mary C. Buletza Breton (3 years)

The Clergy Vice-Chair announced that there was a tie for the position of Lay Alternate for the Pension Board. Therefore, a run-off election between Ivan Rudolph-Shabinsky and Paula Holoviak will be held at Plenary Session V.

HOUSEKEEPING

Dn. Peter Ilchuk noted various schedule matters. The meeting was adjourned at 3:36 p.m. with the singing of "It Is Truly Meet."

Orthodox Church in America

20th All-American Council

Plenary Session V

Friday, July 22, 2022

The session was convened at 10:33 a.m. with the singing of “The Grace of the Holy Spirit.”

It was announced that the Minutes of Plenary Session IV have been approved by the Holy Synod.

SPECIAL ELECTION

Priest Timothy Yates outlined the election procedures for the run-off election between Dr. Paula Holoviak and Mr. Ivan Rudolph-Shabinsky for the Lay Alternate Position on the Pension Board.

Voting was conducted by secret ballot.

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT

Hierarchs: 10

Clergy Delegates: 149

Lay Delegates: 130

Clergy Observers: 6

Lay Observers: 33

FINAL RESOLUTIONS

Archpriest Timothy Sawchak, Chair of the Resolutions Committee, presented a final resolution for the consideration of the 20th AAC. A resolution regarding the Pension Board and Pension Plan governance was proposed as follows:

WHEREAS the delegates to the 20th All-American Council (AAC) desire to see the Metropolitan Council and the Pension Board work in Christian harmony;

WHEREAS the Pension Board describes their desire to “provide meaningful retirement information for seminary educators, clergy, and eligible lay staff” (Pension Office Report to the 20th AAC);

WHEREAS the Metropolitan Council, in the interest of full accountability and transparency, and pursuant to Article V Section 7 of the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America, requires complete, accurate, and up-to-date information on a regular and periodic basis;

THEREFORE, pursuant to Article III Section 4 (e) of the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America, be it resolved by the 20th All-American Council that:

1. A member of the Pension Board should appear at each regular Metropolitan Council session to report on the condition, activities and status of the Pension Plan and answer questions regarding it;
2. The Pension Board should provide to the Metropolitan Council at least semi-annually, and in advance of the regularly scheduled session of the Metropolitan Council, all relevant current financial details, including, but not limited to, assets, liabilities, market value funding ratio, actuarial value funding ratio, surplus/deficit, plan participation, plan performance in comparison with the assumed plan projections, trend graphs for terminal and operational funding, and such other relevant information as requested by the Metropolitan Council;
3. The Metropolitan Council should designate a liaison and provide that name to the Pension Board. The liaison should be invited to attend each meeting of the Pension Board to receive information about the Pension Plan and to convey concerns from the Metropolitan Council.
4. The Metropolitan Council and the Pension Board are expected to work together, having regular collaborative sessions to ensure Pension Plan participants and employers can have confidence that their best interests are being served;
5. Once the Pension Board reports have been accepted by the Metropolitan Council, they should be included in the Metropolitan Council minutes and be posted accordingly. The Pension Board should post the accepted report on the Pension Board website as well.
6. The Pension Board should provide clearly formulated and transparent reports to all plan participants no less than once every six months.

Presented by Archbishop Mark, Archbishop Alexander and the Metropolitan Council subcommittee on the Pension Plan.

Point of order: Archpriest Alexander Rentel, OCA Chancellor noted slight corrections to the text:

The third “Whereas” text should refer to ‘Article V Section 7 (e)’ and the “Therefore” text should read ‘Article III, Section 4.’

Before further consideration of the resolution, the Youth Program presentation took place.

YOUTH PROGRAM PRESENTATION

Archpriest Benjamin Tucci, Director of the AAC Youth Program, expressed gratitude to all who have supported youth programs throughout the Orthodox Church in America as well as the Holy Synod for being attentive to the youth during this Council, and the youth staff for being “Vessels of Grace” this

week. There were 137 youth participants and 41 youth staff at the Council. They had an amazing week and we thank you for your support.

Daniel Rentel (St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, Yonkers, NY) and Elizabeth Vallena (St. Tikhon Mission, Parker, CO), youth participants, read a statement on behalf of the youth.

Your Beatitude, Your Eminences, Your Graces, Very Reverend and Reverend Clergy, Monastics, and Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America,

GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST!

I'm Daniel Rentel from St. Vlad's Seminary in New York.

I'm Elizabeth Vallena from St. Tikhon's Mission in Colorado. This week at the All-American Council Youth Program, we explored the theme of Vessels of Grace. We have 5 points we would like to bring to the council based on our journey together.

Our Orthodox Faith is beautiful and becomes more and more necessary and relevant for our world. Our Faith though mystical is also rational. Yesterday I was talking to Bishop Andrei before Liturgy, and he jokingly said that he wanted to drink a Coke. I said, "Bishop Andrei, you can't do that!" He replied, "why not?" I didn't know. He said, "our Faith is rational; you should be able to explain it."

There's an unfortunate disconnect between secular society and the Church. Today's society faces many complex challenges; and their answers can be found in the Church. The Church's answers are profound, and we need to do our best to communicate them effectively.

We do not fit the world's stereotype of churchgoers. We want to challenge those stereotypes by being more open with our faith, unashamed, not hiding it. We were inspired by the procession to the Liturgy, it was a powerful demonstration of our Faith.

So, what does it mean to be Orthodox?

We invite others to come and see for themselves. Our spiritual experiences are very deep and connect us to God and each other. We wish to demonstrate that connection by our actions, embodying the scriptures and preaching by example.

We recognize our shared community. We have created powerful bonds with each other. We'd like to expand this experience of community by strengthening relationships on our local level.

On behalf of all the participants of the Youth Program, we would like to thank the Council body, the Church administration, The Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America for their support,

and a special thanks to our teachers, chaperones, and our program directors, Fr. Ben Tucci and Matushka Elizabeth Wyslutsky.

Fr. Tucci then introduced a nine-minute video presentation on the activities of the Youth Program at the 20th AAC.

Fr. Rentel thanked Fr. Tucci and the staff of the youth program, and gratitude was also expressed to Archpriest Michael Anderson for organizing the first AAC Youth Program in 1999. Fr. Rentel challenged the participants of this AAC's youth program to step up to be the next generation of church leaders, adding, "go to seminary for goodness' sake!" The youth participants then left the plenary hall.

ELECTION RESULTS

It was announced that Mr. Ivan Rudolph-Shabinsky has been elected Pension Board Lay Alternate.

RESOLUTIONS (continued)

Consideration of the pension resolution resumed. Priest John Kotalik, St. John the Baptist Church, Canonsburg, PA, seconded the resolution.

DISCUSSION

Proponent: Priest John Cox, Holy Ascension Church, Mt. Pleasant, SC: Like His Beatitude, he was disappointed in the result of the failed Statute amendment regarding the Pension Plan, but is relieved to see that we all agree that the Pension Plan is in trouble and needs attention. Younger peers currently don't feel optimistic that the plan will be there when they retire. This resolution will go a long way toward restoring confidence in the Plan.

Question: Fr. Kotalik. If passed, would this resolution be binding or simply advisory? The Lay Vice-Chair replied that the adopted resolution would be a statement from the AAC regarding preferred procedures.

AMENDMENT

Amendment motion: Archpriest David Garretson, SS. Peter & Paul Church, South River, NJ: Proposed an amendment to add a #7: That mandatory professional third party benefit plan administration training shall be provided to the MC, Pension Board, and officers of the Church.

Amendment seconded by Archpriest Joseph Lickwar, SS. Peter & Paul Cathedral, Jersey City, NJ.

DISCUSSION ON THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT

Proponent: Fr. Garretson noted that people are talking past each other. Everyone wants the best. People, in their zeal, are not fully understanding the issues. In his job as an officer of an international

union, everyone receives such training as denoted in the amendment. If passed, Fr Garretson pledged to pay for the training from now until the next AAC.

Bishop Daniel: The amendment is good, but the word “mandatory” needs to be removed because enforcement is not in the competence of this body.

Fr. Garretson: Agreed to strike the word “mandatory.” The proposed amendment reads “7. That professional third party benefit plan administration training shall be provided to the MC, Pension Board, and officers of the Church.”

Question: Priest Joel Brady, Holy Apostles Mission, Lansing, NY, asked who is included in the officers of the Church? Answer: Chancellor, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Proponent: Archpriest Alexander Vallens, St. Tikhon Mission, Parker, CO would like to change “shall” to “should” to keep language in the rest of amendment consistent.

Fr Garretson agreed to the change, updating the proposed amendment to read: “7. That professional third party benefit plan administration training should be provided to the Metropolitan Council, Pension Board, and officers of the Church.”

Question: Mka. Mary Buletza-Breton, Church of the Annunciation, Brick, NJ and Pension Board member: What is the definition of “resolution” and how is that compared and contrasted to the definition of “mandate”? Answer: Resolution is advisory; Statute is mandatory.

Proponent: Priest Jonathan Lincoln, Christ the Savior Church, Chicago, IL: There is a sense that many of us did not understand the core of what was at stake, because we are not financial people, so any kind of financial training at the highest level would be much appreciated; perhaps even clergy could be better educated on these things.

The Lay Vice-Chair called the question. The amendment was carried unanimously.

DISCUSSION (continued)

Discussion on the proposed resolution resumed.

Question: Mr. Eldred Brown, St. Nicholas Church, Portland, OR: Regarding point # 4 – “having regular collaborative sessions” – how frequent is regular? Fr. Rentel - This is statutory; it refers to the regular spring and fall sessions of the Metropolitan Council.

Comment: Dn. Matthew Prentice, Metropolitan Council, clarified that he drafted point 4. The intention was not just when the Metropolitan Council meets, but also when the Pension Board meets.

Proponent: Priest Peter Robichau, St. Seraphim of Sarov Cathedral, Dallas, TX: Yesterday’s election demonstrated the flaws of the process: people with name recognition, but perhaps not the best expertise, were elected to the Pension Board. The most qualified candidate was not elected. This

resolution does not provide a clear path to restoring the health of the plan, but it should pass. The Pension Board should cut administrative costs before asking for more money.

Proponent: Fr. Garretson: I believe what happened before between the Metropolitan Council and the Pension Board can be resolved, and I speak strongly in favor of the resolution as amended.

Voting then took place. The Resolution was carried unanimously as follows:

WHEREAS the delegates to the 20th All-American Council (AAC) desire to see the Metropolitan Council and the Pension Board work in Christian harmony;

WHEREAS the Pension Board describes their desire to “provide meaningful retirement information for seminary educators, clergy, and eligible lay staff” (Pension Office Report to the 20th AAC);

WHEREAS the Metropolitan Council, in the interest of full accountability and transparency, and pursuant to Article V Section 7 (e) of the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America, requires complete, accurate, and up-to-date information on a regular and periodic basis;

THEREFORE, pursuant to Article III Section 4 of the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America, be it resolved by the 20th All American Council that:

1. A member of the Pension Board should appear at each regular Metropolitan Council session to report on the condition, activities and status of the Pension Plan and answer questions regarding it;
2. The Pension Board should provide to the Metropolitan Council at least semi-annually, and in advance of the regularly scheduled session of the Metropolitan Council, all relevant current financial details, including, but not limited to, assets, liabilities, market value funding ratio, actuarial value funding ratio, surplus/deficit, plan participation, plan performance in comparison with the assumed plan projections, trend graphs for terminal and operational funding, and such other relevant information as requested by the Metropolitan Council;
3. The Metropolitan Council should designate a liaison and provide that name to the Pension Board. The liaison should be invited to attend each meeting of the Pension Board to receive information about the Pension Plan and to convey concerns from the Metropolitan Council.
4. The Metropolitan Council and the Pension Board are expected to work together, having regular collaborative sessions to ensure Pension Plan participants and employers can have confidence that their best interests are being served;

5. Once the Pension Board reports have been accepted by the Metropolitan Council, they should be included in the Metropolitan Council minutes and be posted accordingly. The Pension Board should post the accepted report on the Pension Board website as well.
6. The Pension Board should provide clearly formulated and transparent reports to all plan participants no less than once every six months.
7. That professional third party benefit plan administration training should be provided to the Metropolitan Council, Pension Board, and officers of the Church.

UPDATED CREDENTIALS REPORT

Hierarchs:	11
Clergy Delegates:	169
Lay Delegates:	153
Total Voters:	333
Clergy Observers:	7
Lay Observers:	42
Youth Participants:	103
Total Participants throughout the 20 th AAC:	669

MILITARY CHAPLAINS REPORT

Archpriest Theodore Boback, Dean and Executive Director of Orthodox Military & Veterans Administration Chaplains, presented a report (*see reports book*) and introduced chaplains Priest James Parnell and Archpriest Peter Dubinin.

Fr. Parnell shared a slide presentation on his 2021 deployment to the Horn of Africa (Somalia, Kenya, Djibouti) with 1,000 soldiers from the Connecticut National Guard. He baptized/chrismated four soldiers and airmen while in Djibouti, and conducted memorial services and events, including a Hierarchical Liturgy with the Metropolitan of Axum. Fr Parnell is also a VA hospital chaplain. He made an appeal to others to serve, either in the US military or in a VA medical center.

Fr. Dubinin spoke of the psychological and spiritual effects of killing, and how most of those who serve in the military are left to handle this alone; what do we do about this? There is a great deal of experience and expertise within our Church, and he asks for prayers that God will raise up those who will care for these service people.

INSTITUTIONAL CHAPLAINCIES REPORT

Archpriest Steven Voytovich, Director of the Office of Institutional Chaplaincies, began by asking prayers for the physicians, nurses, and other health care workers who were on the front lines caring for others during the pandemic, and shared a slide presentation with highlights from his attached written report.

The Office of Institutional Chaplains will celebrate twenty years of formal endorsement in 2023. The Office reviews and recommends endorsements for Orthodox clergy and laypersons.

The OCA is a member of the Commission on Ministry in Specialized Settings (COMISS). Fr. Steven will become the chair in 2023.

Fr. Steven shared statements from four OCA institutional chaplains currently serving in the field. (*see slides*)

Fr. Steven attended an international conference on chaplaincy held in Russia in October of 2021, and was the only Orthodox Chaplain presenter from among international presentations.

UPDATE

Fr. Rentel provided an update on Dr. Constantine Kallaur. Last night following the Council banquet, Dr. Kallaur (the last living member of the OCA delegation that received the Tomos of Autocephaly) had a fall on the escalator in the hotel. He is still in the hospital, but will not require surgery. Prayers of the entire council for his healing would be appreciated.

VIDEO PRESENTATIONS

Fr. Rentel introduced videos from ELEOS, the humanitarian agency of the Polish Orthodox Church, the recipient of the OCA campaign to support Ukrainian refugees. The videos consisted of expressions of gratitude from Metropolitan Sawa of Poland and recipients of aid, and demonstrated how the funds were used. At \$725,000, this was the single largest charitable appeal that the OCA has ever undertaken. Fr. Rentel noted that the largest single gift was \$10,000, showing that the bulk of contributed funds was made up of many small and individual donations.

The Clergy Vice-Chair noted that today is the 30th anniversary of the repose of Protopresbyter John Meyendorff; may his memory be eternal!

The video from St. Tikhon's Seminary, *The Father Fred Challenge*, was shown, having been postponed from the previous session due to time constraints.

OTHER BUSINESS

Questions/Comments from the floor were entertained.

Question: Archpriest Nicholas Wyslutsky, St. Nicholas Church, Mogadore, OH, National Spiritual Advisor for the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians of America (FOCA): Throughout the pandemic, FOCA had the opportunity to redefine itself and to contemplate how it could better serve the Church. He expressed thanks to FOCA and individuals for their efforts in raising over \$10,000 in a month's time to support this week's youth program. At its own convention, which immediately preceded the AAC, FOCA submitted a resolution to the Holy Synod to define more specifically the relationship between the OCA and FOCA. Current members wish to do much for the Church. Fr Wyslutsky asked what, if anything, came from the discussion in response to the resolution.

Metropolitan Tikhon answered that the resolution was presented to the Synod and there is agreement that it would be very useful to take up the offer of FOCA to assist the OCA. Bishops Andrei and Gerasim will be asked to form a commission on youth. They will begin immediately to compile contacts of youth leaders throughout dioceses and conduct an initial Zoom meeting in order to take the next step of what was begun in St. Louis and interrupted by the pandemic. It is time to formulate something much more robust to help our youth. His Beatitude extended his thanks to FOCA.

Comment: Fr. Kotalik expressed thanks to all members of the Metropolitan Council and the Pension Board for all that they do for the Church. He knows the men and women in both bodies, and knows they have good intentions, and he hopes they can work together going forward.

Comment: Archpriest John Parker, Dean of St. Tikhon's Seminary: Expressed thanks for being able to show the Fr. Fred video today.

Comment: Archpriest Yousuf Rassam, St. Innocent Church, Tarzana, CA: Expressed thanks to the Metropolitan, Synod, and Officers for the difficult work of maintaining relationships with other Orthodox churches. Fr. Rassam thanked His Beatitude for his carefully balanced statements and efforts to protect Orthodox unity in America.

Comment: Archpriest Raymond Browne, St. Mark Church, Wrightstown, PA, Chancellor of the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania: Requested for future AACs that the youth and chaplaincies presentations we saw on the last day be moved to the forefront before the discussion of resolutions as they are most inspiring.

METROPOLITAN'S CONCLUDING REMARKS

His Beatitude formally offered his gratitude to council vice-chairs Fr. Jarmus and Mrs. Benton. He thanked Mr. Donald Garrett, Parliamentarian, and Mr. David Lane for navigating the proceedings.

Though the week is coming to an end, our work is just beginning. We must carry this work forward to our parishes, dioceses, and the Church at large.

The Divine Liturgy is the center of life. It is both a beginning and an end, a renewal and the summit of experience – it is that for which we live, and it is that which exists so that we can live. The All-American Council is the highest expression of ecclesiastical conciliar existence for us. This council

takes place so that we can draw upon each other's experience and talent for the service of the Church at large. Today on this feast of St. Mary Magdalene, we recall that she did not keep the news of the Lord's Resurrection to herself; she went and told the apostles. May the Lord bless us, also, as we go out to carry forth the Good News.

ADJOURNMENT

It was announced that the installation of the newly elected Metropolitan Council and Pension Board members would take place immediately following adjournment.

Archpriest Kirill Sokolov, Holy Trinity Cathedral, San Francisco, CA, Chancellor of the Diocese of the West, moved to adjourn the Council.

The 20th All-American Council adjourned at 12:45 p.m. with the singing of "It is Truly Meet."

Council manager, Dn. Peter Ilchuk announced that a straw poll for the location of the next AAC did not take place because prospective locations have not yet been identified.

Metropolitan's Report

Report of the Metropolitan



His Beatitude, The Most Blessed Tikhon

**Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All-America and Canada**

20th All-American Council

**Baltimore, Maryland
Tuesday, July 19, 2022**

o. Introduction

In my address last evening, I spoke about the broad trajectory of our Orthodox Church in America and of our part, our vocation, within that trajectory. This morning, I will report on some more concrete aspects of my work, the work of the chancery, and the work of the Church over the four years that have elapsed since our gathering in Council in Saint Louis. I will focus on these key areas: 1) the COVID-19 pandemic, 2) our vacant dioceses, 3) the chancery restructuring, the chancery relocation, & the work of the chancery, and 4) the Office of Pastoral Life, 5) the Office of External Affairs.

In some ways, these past four years since we last met may have felt like a pause in our apostolic voyage. In fact, though we have found ourselves at times bestormed, at times alarmingly becalmed, at times subject to squalls then to baffling winds, this voyage has continued, as I hope this report will make concrete. And, speaking of calms and storms over these last few years, it is appropriate to move on to my first key area, and to begin with COVID-19.

1. COVID-19

Our council takes place in the season of Pentecost, at a time when the world begins to more fully emerge from the heavy burden of a global health crisis, a crisis which emerged over two years ago at the beginning of the Lenten season in 2020. After a long stretch of penance and tears, we hope in the Name of the Lord that we are entering into a season of new life in the Spirit.

However, in expressing this hope, we acknowledge that the past two and a half years have been difficult on many levels and it is perhaps too soon to offer a complete assessment of the impact of covid on our lives and the lives of our dioceses, our parishes, and our families. The physical, emotional, and psychological toll has been devastating. Death, illness, separation, isolation, anxiety, addiction, societal polarization and political fracturing, loneliness, suicide, anger, frustration, fear, violence: these have become the atmosphere in which we live. Despite the seeming-end of the health crisis, the many crises that were spawned by the pandemic and pandemic response remain with us, and may do so for many years. Nevertheless, the life of the Church has continued, struggled, and, in many ways, flourished, even in these trying circumstances.

Two of the last events that were held in what we now call “pre-covid times” were the ordinations to the episcopacy of His Grace, Bishop Alexei in Washington, DC, and of His Grace, Bishop Andrei in Cleveland, Ohio. On January 25, 2020, Bishop Alexei was ordained as auxiliary to the primate and assigned to the see of Bethesda and, one week later, on February 1, 2020, Bishop Andrei was ordained. Then, shortly after these joyful and significant events in the life of the Orthodox Church in America, the entire world was transformed by the advent of the covid pandemic.

But as the pandemic raged on, the work of the Church continued. On May 18, 2021, Bishop Gerasim was elected bishop of Fort Worth, and he was ordained bishop last year on the

feast of Sts. Peter and Paul. In many cases, the difficulties of the pandemic increased the sense of community in our parishes. The pandemic prompted many outside the Church to seek, knock, and ask. And the Lord, through his priests and faithful, has welcomed many of these seekers into his fold. In the meantime, all of us have received what should be a salutary reminder of our fragility, mortality, and ignorance, and thus our dependence, first on God, and second on one another.

We have all borne heavy burdens during this time. Each of my brother bishops, especially, faced the challenges of not merely formulating but implementing Synodal directives, not in one parish, but throughout an entire diocese. This meant answering questions and concerns from clergy and faithful in various states and jurisdictions, often over wide geographic areas, and sometimes dealing with significant cultural, economic, and social differences. Although we exerted much labor together in preparing our Synodal directives and in periodically reviewing and revising them through many zoom meetings and email discussions, the more difficult part was the multitude of questions, complaints, concerns, agitations, and even anger and judgement from our flocks resulting from our pastoral care. I would like to reiterate my gratitude toward my brothers, and invite the gratitude of the whole Church toward our episcopate. Certainly, during this time, I have relied on the consultation and support of the Holy Synod as a whole but also have appreciated the opportunity to confer one on one with many of our bishops.

I would like to conclude by recalling all those clergy we have lost during the pandemic, among them Metropolitan Theodosius, Archbishop David, and Archbishop Paul. According to the work of Mr. Andrew Boyd, which I cite with gratitude, the combined number of years of pastoral service for all those clergy we have lost during the past few years is 2,208 years. It is incumbent upon all of us to strive to fill the gap that these departed clergy leave behind by imitating their wisdom and virtue, perhaps learning from their errors, and always honoring and building upon their legacy. We will have an opportunity to offer some expression of this tomorrow evening as we offer a memorial service at which each of their names will be lifted up with a request that their souls indeed may be received rest in the mansions of heaven.

2. Vacant Dioceses

In my discussion of the pandemic, I have mentioned a few episcopal ordinations as well as tragic episcopal losses. I would like now to turn briefly to the situation of our vacant dioceses in the Church.

The episcopal throne of diocese of Alaska, left vacant by the death of Archbishop David, has now been filled by my former auxiliary, Bishop Alexei. May God grant him and his flock many years. Archbishop Paul's death left the Diocese of the Midwest without a chief shepherd, but just yesterday, His Grace Bishop Daniel, who has served as locum tenens for that diocese, was nominated by a special assembly and then elected by the Holy Synod to be the new Bishop of Chicago and the Midwest. Again, congratulations and many years to him and his flock.

In the meanwhile, the Diocese of New England and the Albanian Archdiocese have suffered without an archpastor since the death of their beloved Archbishop Nikon in 2019. The work of finding

candidates for these sees is ongoing. Here, I note as well that tomorrow we will participate in the divine liturgy presided at by Bishop Andrei of the Romanian Episcopate and concelebrated by the clergy of all three of our ethnic dioceses.

3. Chancery Restructuring, Relocation, & Operations

Moving from our dioceses to our central administration, I recall that one of the major components of my address in Saint Louis concerned the structure and operation of the chancery of the Orthodox Church in America. At that time, I noted that I had initiated a process of restructuring of the chancery operations. Rather than a full restructuring, this process was meant as a reset, a way to fine-tune the structure for optimal functioning of the central administration. As part of that restructuring process, I indicated that I was accepting the resignations of all three officers at that time: Archpriest John Jillions as Chancellor, Archpriest Eric Tosi as Secretary, and Ms. Melanie Ringa as Treasurer and, in Saint Louis and on other occasions, I offered my sincere gratitude to each of them for their honorable service during the first seven years of my primatial ministry. I continue to be thankful for their continued contributions to the life of the Church in other capacities in our seminaries and in our dioceses.

After this, I formed a restructuring committee, appointing His Grace, Bishop Daniel of Santa Rosa as chairman. His team consisted of Archpriest John Dresko from the Diocese of the West, Archpriest Timothy Hojnicky from the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania, and Ms. Lisa Mikhalevsky from the Archdiocese of Washington, all three of whom were members of the Metropolitan Council at the time. I charged this committee with undertaking the necessary research and work that would allow us to effect a transition to a revised chancery structure by January 1, 2019. With the expertise and guidance of this committee, we began to try to untangle the ambiguities that had arisen over twenty years of administrative changes in the central administration. There is no need to detail the financial and administrative crises that erupted at various points, but it is important to bear in mind that, throughout those years, a variety of corrective administrative models were implemented, as a result of, and also in response to, those particular crises. The corrective changes in administration have, in an overall sense, been a tremendous improvement for the administrative functioning of the Church in general, and of the chancery in particular. This is true especially in the area of financial accountability and transparency, but also more broadly in the fostering of a more effective collaborative and conciliar spirit on all levels of the Church, including within the Holy Synod.

At the same time, and in part because the various changes in administrative structure were being implemented in the very midst of each subsequent crisis, it had not been possible to properly assess and re-evaluate those changes with a view towards future growth and expansion rather than in response or reaction to various crises. The opportunity to do so presented itself in 2018, at which time I put in place the aforementioned restructuring committee. The committee reviewed the general identifying characteristics of the successive

administrations and considered the advantages and disadvantages of each model. I also shared at length my own experience both as primate and also during my time as a bishop, during which time I had already had somewhat less immediate but nevertheless meaningful experience of the functioning of previous administrative models.

Again, without going into the various historical administrative crises and the personalities associated with them, the committee considered the various models: the initial model with a strong chancellor in whom all of the decision-making authority was held, a model with four (later reduced to three) co-equal officers, each reporting directly to the Metropolitan, with no intermediary; a modified version of this second model, where the chancellor was given the designation “chief of staff” and elevated to a slightly higher level than the other officers. This last model was originally implemented because of difficulties in identifying a final decision-maker among the four officers.

During the first six years of my primatial ministry, the confusion caused by the ambiguity of this succession of models being followed made it clear that a re-evaluation of the functioning of the Chancery was in order. The overarching concern that I have had, as the primate, is to maintain the ability to articulate a single vision for the Church, a vision that reflects the will of the Holy Synod, properly implements the positive administrative policies outlined in the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America, and maintains the safeguards that have been implemented in the recent past because of various difficulties. Through the dedicated work of the restructuring committee, a revised structural flow-chart for the chancery was developed. The proposed structure more clearly addressed some of the areas where improvements in communication, reporting, and oversight had been needed. In addition, the restructuring committee worked on updating the job descriptions for all chancery positions in order to conform to the revised structure and to better reflect the needs of the primatial office. This week, we will have the opportunity to consider a Statute Amendment whose purpose is to clarify the Statute and enshrine the current model therein. With respect to that Amendment, I am fully supportive of its intent as it accurately reflects the current reality and, I believe, the optimal organizational structure for the chancery.

Apart from clarifying these structural issues, I have been able, with the diligent work and assistance of the committee, to appoint new chancery officers in accordance with the timeline I had set. Archpriest Alexander Rentel was appointed Chancellor on January 1, 2019. Afterward, Mr. Andrew Smith was appointed Treasurer and Archpriest Alessandro Margheritino was appointed Secretary. Through the restructuring process, we have also added to the chancery staff. Susan Wisnewski has come on board as our finance manager; Priest Lavrentije Soper as the assistant to the Chancellor; Deacon Peter Ilchuk as my personal assistant and deacon; and Priest John Mikitish as my corresponding secretary. But I will not go into deep of detail concerning personnel, as Father Alexander will cover much of this material in his report.

At the same time that chancery has undergone restructuring, we have also begun the process of relocating to the chancery to the canonical territory of my see, the Archdiocese of Washington. I went

into some detail concerning the canonical, pastoral, and practical reasons for this move in my address last night. I only mention here that our OCA Secretary, Fr. Alessandro Margheritino, and I each made our respective moves from Long Island to the Washington D.C., area this June, and the chancery has now obtained temporary offices in Springfield, VA. We anticipate that more chancery staff will be joining us in the area very soon, and plan on completing the chancery relocation by some time next year. Later in this morning's session, we will hear a fuller report from the co-chairs of the Relocation Committee.

4. Clergy Health

One of the most central emphases in my document, *Of What Life Do We Speak?*, and in the four pillars outlined therein, is clergy health. Here I will not speak in much detail about what has been accomplished but I would like to offer some words of recognition to the Office of Pastoral Life, through which many of these accomplishments have been brought to life. First, I would like to recognize the great contributions made by Archbishop Paul, of blessed memory, who served as synodal liaison for the Office of Pastoral Life. I also want to express my gratitude to His Grace Bishop Alexei who, until his recent election as Bishop of Alaska, served as the chairman of the Office. Under the direction of both hierarchs, the Office maintained a regular schedule of monthly meetings and accomplished much in the areas of clarifying and updating the Clergy Salary Guidelines, revising the Clergy Guidelines (which is ongoing but should be completed soon), and supporting both the Thriving in Ministry Programs and the related Synaxis Program. We will hear more about the latter this afternoon in the forum that we have scheduled on that topic but I am pleased with the work and I look forward to increased activity in the Office, especially with the appointment of a new chairman, Archpriest Nicholas Solak.

There is one specific area of clergy health that I would like to speak to at this point, one which we have occasion, again later in this morning's session, to consider more carefully. I am speaking of the Pension Plan of the Orthodox Church in America. Most of you are aware of the process that has taken place over the past year with respect to the pension plan and of the vigorous discussion that has been going on of late. I would like to offer some words to both place these discussions in context and to offer my own recommendations to the All-American Council.

At the outset, let me state very clearly that the discussion and review of the pension plan is both a necessary and a needed discussion for the entire Church to engage in. The health of our clergy, their wives or widows, and our other church workers is paramount and includes the ability to enter into retirement with dignity and with a proper recognition of their pastoral service, of their vocation.

Based on the review those concern, I accept the findings of the Cheiron report, the Pension plan is underfunded and in a state of decline. I believe that we need to take urgent action to address the matter. This is a liability that we have to attend to.

External Affairs

Having spoken about our church's internal affairs, I now turn to external affairs. When speaking about the Office of External Affairs and Interchurch Relations, we cannot but start with an acknowledgment of the significant and long-lasting contributions made by Protopresbyter Leonid Kishkovsky, the long-serving director of the Office, who fell asleep in the Lord on August 3rd, 2021. Fr. Leonid's passing is a great loss for the Orthodox Church in America, since he served so faithfully and for such a long time as Director of External Affairs for the Orthodox Church in America even while maintaining his role as pastor at Our Lady of Kazan Church for over 40 years. He was also active in many other ways, serving, for example, as editor of the Orthodox Church newspaper and as advisor to the Holy Synod and individual bishops. We are still saddened by his passing but grateful to God for the decades of service he offered to the Church. Fr. Leonid's contributions to the mission of the Orthodox Church in America cannot be overstated and his dedication to the defense of our life as an autocephalous Church through his untiring efforts in the area of External Church Relations should continue to be acknowledged and highlighted. May his memory be eternal and may his soul dwell with the blessed.

That said, over the last few years, as Fr. Leonid's health declined, my office began to more directly attend to matters relating to external church relations. At the same time, I determined that it would be useful to consider ways to streamline the work of the Office of External Affairs, whose existence and work is central to my ability to represent the Orthodox Church in America to the world: both to our sister Churches as well as other ecclesial and ecumenical bodies. It is evident to me, and I think to all of us, that it will be impossible to replace Fr. Leonid or to find a single person who will possess the institutional memory and wealth of connections that he had. Nevertheless, it is important to maintain a robust Office of External Affairs for the Orthodox Church in America. At present, my Chancellor, Fr. Alexander Rentel, serves as the main coordinator for the Office. Archbishop Alexander serves as episcopal liaison and the Office maintains a number of consultants. We have held a number of meetings with the current active consultants and potential new consultants. In addition, Fr. John Mikitish, who has recently been hired at the Chancery to serve as my corresponding secretary, also assists in the area of external church relations.

To move from organizational to substantial questions of our Church's external affairs, I would like to begin by expressing my overall approach to our external relations, underlining what I have consistently maintained and shared with the Holy Synod, namely: it is crucial for the Orthodox Church in America, which occupies a fragile position in world Orthodoxy, both firmly to maintain our status as an autocephalous Church and courageously to maintain our relations with the other Orthodox Churches, both globally and locally in North America. As anyone who follows the complex and ever-changing ecclesiastical politics of the Orthodox world might suspect, this is not an easy balance to achieve. However, I am confident that we can continue to maintain this balance even as we dedicate our energy to strengthening the internal life of our Church. This internal life is ultimately the strongest witness to our role in the wider ecclesiastical context.

In terms of individual Churches, let me begin with some reflections on the two most globally prominent Churches, that of Constantinople and that of Moscow. These two leading Orthodox Churches, globally speaking, have become more acutely adversarial through a number of successive events, beginning with the preparations to the Great and Holy Council in 2016. Then the Ecumenical Patriarch acted to give autocephaly to the so-called Orthodox Church of Ukraine. Recently comes the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation. As is well known, the Church of Moscow has broken communion with the Church of Constantinople but the Church of Constantinople has not responded in kind.

In accordance with my broader goal of maintaining good relations with all of our sister churches, I have been active in strengthening ties with both of these great sees even as their mutual relations have deteriorated.

With respect to our relations with the Ecumenical Throne, since my election as primate, I have travelled four times to Istanbul. The first occasion, in 2014, was made possible as a visit, not of the primate of an autocephalous church, but as the president of Saint Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary for the purpose of visiting the Halki seminary. As part of that trip, I was able to meet with His All-Holiness, Patriarch Bartholomew. The second visit came a year later, in 2015, when I travelled to Istanbul as an invited guest of the Executive Committee of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the United States. If you recall, until the arrival of Archbishop Elpidophoros, the Primate of the Orthodox Church in America was not included as a member of the Executive Committee. Now I am a member of that body, along with His Eminence, Archbishop Michael, who continues to serve as the Treasurer of the Assembly.

In 2016, I was invited to concelebrate at the Phanar for the Sunday of Orthodoxy. Those who observed this event will have noted that, in the order of serving, I did not serve in the position of the primate of an Orthodox Church. This was to be expected, since, as is well known, the Church of Constantinople has never recognized the autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in America. Nevertheless, I chose to accept to serve in a lower position, the 11th position to be precise, for the sake of maintaining communion and brotherly relations with the ancient see of Constantinople. It should also be remembered that, until that point, to my best knowledge, no primate of the Orthodox Church in America had ever served with the Ecumenical Patriarch.

Finally, in 2019, I travelled once more to Turkey and concelebrated with Patriarch Bartholomew in Cappadocia, a land that once was populated by over 3,000 churches, monasteries, and chapels, but now lies almost completely deserted of any Orthodox Christian presence. There, I served in the second position, as His All-Holiness placed me above the other senior metropolitan who was concelebrating with us.

On the other hand, since my election as primate, I have travelled six times to Moscow: the first time in 2013 for the celebrations of the 1025th anniversary of the baptism of Rus; the second in 2014 for my

official primatial and irenic visit, that is, the visit that newly-elected primates traditionally make to the other Orthodox Churches; the third in 2016 for the 70th birthday of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill; the fourth in 2017 for the celebrations surrounding the 100th anniversary of the enthronement of my own patron, Saint Tikhon of Moscow and Enlightener of North America. In 2019, I travelled twice to Moscow, first in February for the 10th anniversary of the enthronement of Patriarch Kirill and the second in December to mark of the 25th anniversary of our representation Church, Saint Catherine in the Fields, presently served by Archpriest Daniel Andrejuk, who joins us this week in Baltimore.

That said, current tensions continue to cause difficulties in the relations among the Orthodox Churches. The position of the Orthodox Church in America on the present aggression in Ukraine has been clear: aggressive violence is a clear violation of the commandments of God, and defense of such violence by those who bear the Name of Jesus Christ borders on the blasphemous. The Holy Synod and I have taken the opportunity to make our views on this matter known on a number of occasions, in a number of fora, and so I will not dwell on the point now. Suffice to say that, amid the many challenging circumstances in the contemporary Orthodox world, I as primate and the Orthodox Church in America strive both to maintain good relations with all the churches while nevertheless speaking the truth in love.

Addiction

In my address last evening, I have spoken of travel, of voyage, of journey. I would here like to add a word about become the most recent destination on my personal health journey, a journey I have undertaken more deliberately over the past 14 months. It is a journey that began as a response to the reality that I was consistently gaining weight over the last decade. That response led to the formulation of a goal, to lose weight, and a plan to accomplish that: hiring a nutritionist for weekly 15-minute check-ins (at \$68 a session), keeping a daily log of my food intake, and exercising more deliberately. Although I have not yet reached my final goal, I have met several milestones along the way and can report that since May of 2021, I have lost 35 pounds.

I mention this in part because I believe that physical health is important, as is mental health, emotional health, and spiritual health. We have occasion this week to touch on these themes. All of these forms of health are important. But we must also be mindful of the reasons for which we pursue these goals. One might perhaps even say that we need to be watchful in the manner that Our Lord calls us to be watchful. That is, to remember that the purpose of any of our activities in life, our work, our play, our relaxing, our vocation, is to be united with the divine life that is offered to us.

Chancellor's Report

Report of the Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America Prepared for the Twentieth All-American Council

July 18-22, 2022

Archpriest Alexander Rentel

1. General Introduction. I report now to the All -American Council for the first time as the Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America, a position I have held since January 1, 2019. Since I assumed this role, the Chancery offices have seen a reorganization, a remarkable turnover of personnel, and a relocation process. Within the Orthodox Church in America, we, as a Church, continue to grapple with new challenges brought on by social media, a highly mobile population, declining parochial membership, political pressures from both the right and the left, as well as the rise of contemporary moral challenges. World Orthodoxy has seen any number of crises that are well known to everyone gathered in this sacred assembly. As is well known to the delegates and observers of the All-American Council, these crises can be found not only on the distant shores of the Mediterranean Basin, the Balkan Peninsula, or in Eastern Europe, but also here in North America. But even more, the world has faced a dire pandemic, wars, increased polarization, and continued economic instability. So much has happened in our lives, in the Church, and in the world at large since I was appointed Chancellor three and a half years ago.

1.1 Becoming Chosen Vessels. While not being separate or removed from all of these things, in fact, being in the midst of all of them, we, as the Orthodox Church in America, gather in this sacred and solemn assembly with no less a goal than to seek, to foster, to encourage, to nurture one another in order to become vessels of divine grace in this broken world. No matter what our conversations are this week, no matter what we discuss or try and discern, no matter how mundane the details of our deliberations, we must remember this goal, how can we enliven this world in which we find ourselves by the true Life, our Lord Jesus Christ, who has given us the grace to bear this life in the world. Certainly, we face challenges internally and externally doing this task, but we should recall that to be a Christian, it means that we are to witness Christ in all we do. In this witness, as we testify to the life we have been given by the True Life, we are doing nothing else than the apostolic work described at the end of Matthew's Gospel, "Go and make disciples of all nations... (Mt 28.19)." Again, our apostolic work in this continent, in this world, at this time, what we do at this council, will not be easy, but we should recall that God has not promised us easy work, but a struggle. When God told Aeneas to go lay hands on Saul, he laid out a pattern for all apostolic work, "Go," He said to Aeneas, "for he [Saul] is a *chosen vessel* of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must *suffer* for the sake of my name (Acts 9.15-16)." To this very day, the toil, the labors, the tribulations of the great Apostle Paul, the "chosen vessel" of God, are with us in his writings and teachings that have formed the foundations of the Church. While our work as the All-American Council might not have the same effect in the life of the Church as the work of the Apostle Paul, we nevertheless share the same pattern: we, delegates and observers, are vessels chosen by God to witness to Him in the

world. In so doing, we will face difficulties, challenges, and obstacles, but by the grace of God, we will overcome them if we have the one goal of carrying His name before all nations.

1.2 Our Labor and Toil. To be sure, the work of the All-American Council differs in the particulars from the labor and toil of parochial ministry, or the struggles of monasticism, or the work of our seminaries, but not the intent. Our gathering is more of a sword than a scalpel, broadly attacking the challenges of the Church. It is not a precise surgical strike, but something bigger, whose effect might be experienced down the road in months and years, instead of something more immediate. The place of our work in council is not in the immediate lives of the faithful, in the prayer-filled cells of the monastic, or in our seminary classrooms, but in broad strokes of administration, resolution, and deliberation. We strive to work out the big picture, come to a common mind, and recall our unity as the Orthodox Church in America. In other words, I would suggest that the All-American Council fulfills our task in this council by making the conditions possible for parishes, monasteries, and seminaries to do the apostolic work of bringing forth chosen vessels of grace in this world. Gathered together, we can make sure that our parishes, our monasteries, and our seminaries have what they need to do what they need. We do this work, of course, by hearing reports, deliberating on proposed amendments and resolutions, considering methods of funding, and so on. So, in the midst of any anxiety we might have about our contemporary world, let us face the tasks before us as participants of this sacred council with all sobriety, knowing the importance of what we are doing here this week: that the wider church is relying on us so they can do what they need to do. But let us also do so with confidence knowing that what we are doing is providing the only real answer to all that afflicts us and, indeed, the world. Namely, let us seek how we can ourselves be, and how we can bring forth chosen and grace-filled vessels of God so that His holy name might be brought to all the world.

1.3 Moving Forward. What follows in my report is less about the themes of this council and more a report on my work as the Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America, which is the administrative office that exists to serve the metropolitan and the Holy Synod in their oversight of the Church. Those of us who work at the Chancery, who exercise the peculiar charism of church administration (cf., I Cor 12:28), remain dedicated, however, to fulfilling the same purpose as anyone else in the Church: serving as chosen and grace-filled vessels of God, striving to do our part in bring forth God's holy name.

2. Chancery Personnel. As I have already alluded to, one of the major features of my time as Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America has been the near complete transition of Chancery personnel. This transition has been brought about by a number of factors: the work of the Chancery Restructuring Committee of the Metropolitan Council, the effects of the pandemic, and the regular changes brought about by the circumstances of life. In order to describe this transition, and by implication much of what has occupied my work since becoming Chancellor, I offer here a review of the many personnel changes that have taken place.

2.1 Chancery Restructuring. Prior to me becoming Chancellor, a committee of the Metropolitan Council, headed by His Grace Bishop Daniel of Santa Rosa, examined the work of the Chancery and made a series of recommendations to His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon, the Holy Synod, and to the

Metropolitan Council about the structure of the Chancery personnel. These recommendations led to the departure of Archpriest John Jillions, my immediate predecessor, in December 2018, and Archpriest Eric Tosi, former Secretary of the Orthodox Church in America, and Ms. Melanie Ringa, former Treasurer of the Orthodox Church in America, both of whom left in the Spring 2019. I take pains to note clearly and unequivocally that all three of these Church officers served our Church honorably and with distinction during very difficult years. In the years since becoming Chancellor and knowing more of what they faced and dealt with, I personally appreciate their service more and more. To each of them, the Orthodox Church in America owes a debt of gratitude. (A good friend reminded me early on in my tenure as Chancellor that we just expect that everyone is just going to work for the Church and be free from scandal, serving faithfully for many years. This expectation is in reality a hope. Further, such a hope masquerading as an expectation, blinds us from seeing the real hard work, and what effort it takes to continue honorably in our positions for years.) After careful consideration, and with the input of the His Beatitude, the Chancery Restructuring Committee also reorganized the organizational flowchart of the Chancery offices so that the position of the Chancellor was considered as a position akin to the metropolitan's chief of staff, with the rest of the Chancery staff reporting to him. This reorganization has more to do with the basic work flow and organization within the Chancery offices, and does nothing to limit the work of the Secretary or the Treasurer, both whom are ex officio members of the Metropolitan Council and report to the Holy Synod.

2.1.1 As Chancellor. Officially, I started my position as Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America on January 1, 2019. Already prior to that date, I began work by having meetings with His Beatitude, members of the Chancery, and both my immediate predecessor, Archpriest John Jillions, and his predecessor, Archpriest Alexander Garklavs. Above all, these meetings help me understand what was expected of me as Chancellor by His Beatitude, what had been expected previously of Chancellors, and what was the current state of the Chancery staff. His Grace Bishop Daniel of Santa Rosa provided me further guidance based on his own previous experience at the Chancery and as head of the Chancery Restructuring Subcommittee. Both he and His Beatitude made clear to me that what was needed now was a Chancellor who functioned much like the metropolitan's chief of staff, and the chief administrator of the Chancery offices. They described the position as follows: the Chancellor is the senior presbyter of the Church, the chief of staff to His Beatitude and his trusted assistant. As Chancellor, I am accountable directly to the Primate and Holy Synod in areas they assign me. In accomplishing my work, I am, of course, to follow all legal, regulatory, and established Best Practices and Policies for Financial Accountability of the Orthodox Church in America. The more complete job description I received, and from which I work, details that I am to assist the metropolitan in executing the decisions of the Holy Synod, managing National and International level clergy-related activities, including seminarian development and ordination, inter-church transfers, continuing education, and retired clergy and widows' support. I am to work closely with the Holy Synod, individual hierarchs and seminaries to implement programs in the best interests of the Church, its dioceses, and individual members of the clergy. As required, I report on progress, note concerns, and offer recommendations to the metropolitan and Holy Synod, as well as to the All-American Council, the Metropolitan Council, and the broader the membership of the Church. In my day-to-day work as Chancellor, I oversee the work of the Secretary of the Orthodox Church in America, the Treasurer and Finance Office, and the

General Counsel, Judge E.R. Lanier. At times I represent His Beatitude or the Holy Synod at official events or occasions. Finally, as Chancellor, I am an *ex officio* member of the boards of trustees at St. Vladimir's Seminary, St. Tikhon's Seminary, and St. Herman's Seminary.

2.1.1.1 Word of Gratitude. As I indicate, both before I even became Chancellor, and throughout my time as Chancellor, His Grace Bishop Daniel has guided and directed me in my work. I am grateful for his advice and collaboration.

2.1.1.2 Work at the Chancery. As Chancellor, heading up the administrative offices, my view about working at the Chancery is simple: we are servants of the Lord. We fulfill this service by attending to the needs and following the directions of the metropolitan, the Holy Synod, and, indeed, the whole Church. I do not believe these are contested points with anyone fulfilling the peculiar ministry of Church administration at the Chancery of the Orthodox Church in America. At each new hire, I state this basic principle in the employment letter. Before I offer specifics of the job, I ask the potential employee to take a moment be sure that he or she wants to dedicate themselves to this purpose, service, which lies behind all our work, and assume a lofty position of serving God's holy Church as a Churchman.

2.1.2 Finance Office. With the departure of Ms. Ringa, we took the steps of addressing the difficulty of hiring someone local who could serve as treasurer. Looking back, the steps we took were prescient given what was to come. In December 2018, we posted a job advertisement on oca.org for the position of the Treasurer of the Orthodox Church in America. In January 2019, we reposted the position, because no fully suitable candidate had applied. When the Chancery Restructuring Committee met in January 2019, it was concluded that something different had to be done with the position. In consultation with that group, as well as the current treasurer, and John Skrobat, a member of the Internal Auditing Committee, His Beatitude decided to divide the Treasurer position into two, parttime positions: a Treasurer, and an Accounting Manager. The Accounting Manager would be the onsite person, responsible for daily bookkeeping and accounting operations. This person would work 3-4 days per week and report to the Treasurer. The Treasurer would have oversight responsibilities over the Accounting Manager; would review monthly bank and investment reconciliations; would produce the quarterly Treasurer Reports to be published online; would present the financial report to the Metropolitan Council and Holy Synod. The plan was to hire someone locally who could serve as the Accounting Manager, which we did, and then hire a Treasurer who would work remotely. Ms. Susan Wisnewski, in fact, was hired quickly as our Accounting Manager, handling the day-to-day financial matters, and Mr. Andrew Smith, after the endorsement of the Metropolitan Council and confirmation by the Holy Synod, was hired as our Treasurer. Both of these hires took place in the Winter and early Spring of 2019. Ms. Wisnewski has taken on additional roles in the Chancery since then, primarily in the areas of plant management and hospitality.

2.1.3 Secretary. After the departure from the Chancery of Fr. Eric Tosi, His Beatitude and I took some time in order to consider the best way forward in hiring a new secretary. The Chancery Restructuring Committee had, in fact, proposed a different job description for this position. His Beatitude and I were faced, therefore, not only with finding the right person, but also determining the right job description.

We determined that we would look for a person who was both qualified for the position and would fit well into the culture of the Chancery, which by that point had shrunk considerably. Eventually, in the Fall of 2020, we settled on Priest Alessandro Margheritino, who was serving as the rector of St. Innocent Church, Olmstead Falls, OH, a parish of the Diocese of the Midwest. At the time, Archbishop Paul of blessed memory was not prepared to give him a canonical release until he could find a replacement for Fr. Alessandro. His Beatitude and I, therefore, decided to make Fr. Alessandro an Executive Assistant working remotely. In the January 2021, we made him Acting Secretary, and after Pascha that year, when a replacement was found for him at St. Innocent's, His Beatitude formally nominated Fr. Alessandro, who was then endorsed by the Metropolitan Council and confirmed in his position as Secretary of the Orthodox Church in America by the Holy Synod at their Regular Spring 2021 Session in Rives Junction, MI.

2.1.4 AAC Manager. In Spring 2019, based on the recommendations of the Chancery Restructuring Committee, His Beatitude and I first prepared a job description in collaboration with Fr. Eric Tosi for a new stipend position, an All-American Council Manager. The person who would fill this role would oversee the planning and logistics for the councils in the period between councils. His Beatitude, Fr. Eric, and I settled on Deacon Peter Ilchuk, who had already been doing this work for previous councils. Since that time, Deacon Peter has worked on the preparations for this present council. In October 2021, he has also taken on responsibilities as the scheduling secretary and deacon for His Beatitude. In all the considerable work that he does, Deacon Peter remains a cleric of the Diocese of Western Pennsylvania, working remotely and parttime for the Chancery.

2.1.5 Archpriest Thomas Soroka. While not directed by the Restructuring Committee, but within the spirit of it, in March 2020, with the blessing of His Beatitude, and the consent of His Eminence Archbishop Melchisedek, I offered a parttime and remote position, Department Project Manager, to Archpriest Thomas Soroka. Fr. Thomas accepted this position and began planning to coordinate, initiate, and oversee the work of the different Departments of the Church. His Beatitude and I took this step in order to revitalize and re-galvanize the work of the departments with the adoption of a different model of work: instead of one expert in each department, Fr. Thomas would oversee the work of different people who propose projects.

2.2 Pandemic. Alongside the work of the Chancery Restructuring Subcommittee of the Metropolitan Council, the effects of the pandemic were profound on the Chancery offices. Like the rest of the world, beginning in the middle of March 2020, in the face of the virus, we adapted as best we could to remote working. Thus, in the face of possible exposures to the virus and uncertainty, on Sunday, March 15, 2020, I informed the Chancery staff and the Pension Administration, which still used offices at the Chancery, that the Chancery offices would be closed until further notice. A week later, on March 22, 2022, His Beatitude and I decided to comply with Governor Cuomo's March 2020 executive order, "New York State on PAUSE," that shut down non-essential businesses. The Metropolitan Council also quickly agreed to apply for the financial assistance that the federal government made available to businesses so that they could continue paying employees during the pandemic. The Orthodox Church in America received that money and we were able to keep everyone on the payroll during this most difficult period.

As soon as we were able, we pivoted from a near fully remote manner of working to a more hybrid model. That is to say, in the early days of the pandemic, we all worked remotely. Gradually, however, a few of us began slowly returning to the Chancery one or two days a week. I am happy to report that during this period, the Chancery staff continued its work unabated. I note further that throughout the worst days of the pandemic, Mr. Barry Migyanko remained at the Chancery, both living upstairs on the third floor and working in his second-floor office. Because we did not have time to prepare for this shift to remote working, his presence at the Chancery was a necessary, and made it possible for the rest of us to do our work. I am grateful to Mr. Migyanko for all the work he does for the Church and the Chancery, but I especially am grateful to him for his work during the pandemic.

2.2.1 Church Meetings and Travel. During the time of the pandemic, like most the world, we did not have in-person meetings. We did, however, maintain, and even expand our meeting schedules with the use of GoToMeeting and many Zoom meetings. The Holy Synod, Metropolitan Council (and its various subcommittees), different Church Offices, Boards and Departments all regularly began using these computer applications to hold their regular and special meetings from that point until the present. In fact, one of the silver linings of the pandemic is that we are much more adept at having these types of meetings, which facilitates our collaborative work. Additionally, from the beginning of the pandemic until just recently, all official travel has been curtailed or limited. It has only been since late last Fall that we at the Chancery have begun a more active travel and in-person meeting schedule. To that end, in October 2021, the Metropolitan Council, the Holy Synod both held their Regular Fall 2021 Sessions in Cleveland, OH. The Metropolitan Council was able to hold its full session, but the Holy Synod had to shorten its meeting due to exposure to the virus. Between these two sessions, the members of the Metropolitan Council and of the Holy Synod joined together with leadership from across the Church – diocesan Chancellors, seminary leaders, the heads of monastic communities – to discuss important matters facing the Church. This meeting also provided the first major in-person meeting since before the pandemic, and served as an opportunity for members of the Orthodox Church in America to have fellowship with each other after a long period of isolation brought on in response to the virus.

2.2.2 Transition to Hybrid and Remote. One other positive development that was hastened by our response to the pandemic was the transition to a more hybrid work environment, one that will continue for the foreseeable future. In the Spring this year, just before His Beatitude and Fr. Alessandro relocated to the Archdiocese of Washington, there were only seven of us working at the Chancery. The bulk of the Chancery staff is, at this point, located all over the United States and Canada. In fact, the style of office work we have adapted has the benefits of tapping into the great wealth of talent within the Orthodox Church in America, without requiring someone to move to Long Island. This then has the benefit of keeping the Chancery staff embedded fully in the life of the Church in parishes and amongst the faithful. I can testify that this aspect of our hybrid model provides us with a good perspective on what is needed, what is possible, and what resonates with the Church. I note with great satisfaction that currently the Chancery extends from Long Island to New Haven, Pittsburgh, Minnesota, Western Canada, San Francisco, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, and, of course, internationally to Moscow. By my count, my colleagues and co-workers live and work in seven dioceses of the Orthodox Church in America and amongst the Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow. Finally, I want to point out that this pattern will no

doubt continue as we search to fill a few more positions, but also when transitions inevitably happen. In order to facilitate this remote and hybrid work, which, to be sure, mirrors what is seen throughout the country presently, we have adopted the use of Slack for internal communications, and Box.com for cloud-based storage. One of the harder developments in this transition was that we determined that we no longer needed a fulltime housekeeper, because we were no longer having in-person meetings at the Chancery. As such, our long-time employee, Ms. Svetlana Radunceva, left the Chancery in the Summer 2020.

2.3 Natural Transitions. Beyond the pandemic and the restructuring, over these past years, the Chancery has seen a number of further transitions.

2.3.1 Tech. In Spring 2019, the Chancery saw the departure of our tech manager, Mr. Ryan Platte. Upon his departure, I reached out to a handful of people in the Orthodox Church in America whom I know to be tech savvy and help a) maintain our tech architecture, and b) advise me on hiring Mr. Platte's replacement. The first step was to find out all that Ryan did, collect documentation, passwords, and map out the different parts of our tech footprint that he was involved in. In this work, I was ably assisted by Archpriest Kirill Sokolov and then Deacon Peter Runyon, who was at that time a current second-year seminarian at St. Vladimir's Seminary from the Diocese of the South. Prior to coming to seminary, Fr. Peter had a high-ranking IT position in Dallas, TX. I also note the contribution of Archpriest John Parsells, who was also a great help in sorting out the complicated issues involving tech matters for the non-techy Chancellor. After sorting through matters, His Beatitude accepted the proposal of Archpriest John Schroedel, who took over from Mr. Platte later in the Summer 2019.

2.3.2 Assistant to the Metropolitan. That same Spring, Mr. Roman Ostash, who had served as the Assistant to the Metropolitan, also left the Chancery. We have not filled his position as Assistant to the Metropolitan to this day. We did, however, use the money that was budgeted for his salary to hire Priest John Thetford, who was, at that time, a seminarian at St. Vladimir's Seminary, as a Seminary Intern. In the face of other transitions, Fr. John became for a while the deacon and personal secretary to His Beatitude. In the Spring 2021, Fr. John asked His Beatitude for a canonical release and transfer to the Diocese of the Midwest, which was granted. During his time at the Chancery, Fr. John was a close and valued collaborator. With the relocation of the Chancery to the Archdiocese of Washington, we will have to look towards finding at least a parttime assistant to His Beatitude, who will, no doubt, see more in terms of travel and parish visitations. During these years, His Beatitude has also been served by a personal secretary, first Archdeacon Joseph Matusiak and then by Priest John Thetford. Both of these clerics left the Chancery in turn, and it was decided that even if we do not have an assistant for His Beatitude, he needs a secretary. In order to facilitate this need, Fr. Alessandro and I decided to split this secretarial job in two parts and hired the following clerics to assist His Beatitude.

2.3.2.1 Deacon Peter Ilchuk. As mentioned above, in October 2021, Deacon Peter Ilchuk assumed the additional responsibilities of being the parttime Executive Secretary to His Beatitude, and either serving as His Beatitude's deacon, or taking the steps necessary to arrange for an appropriate serving deacon, which will require training and coordination. Deacon Peter assists in maintaining His Beatitude's

schedule, reviewing His Beatitude email and mail, and responding accordingly, which means answering himself on behalf of His Beatitude, or directing it to the appropriate person for a response. Deacon Peter also coordinates logistics for His Beatitude's trips. He took on these responsibilities while maintaining his position as All-American Council Manager, and, to a degree, his canonical assignment to His Eminence Archbishop Melchisedek and the Diocese of Western Pennsylvania.

2.3.2.2 Priest John Mikitish. In order to assist His Beatitude further, we have also taken on Priest John Mikitish, a cleric of the Diocese of New England, who serves as the Corresponding Secretary for His Beatitude. Fr. John assists His Beatitude in drafting letters, sermons, speeches, texts of all sorts. We anticipate Fr. John and his wife moving to the Archdiocese of Washington later this Fall in order for him to take up a fulltime position, in which he will continue to assist His Beatitude and take on the responsibility of helping me in the area of coordinating our External Affairs activity.

2.3.3 Media and Communications. In August 2019, Archpriest John Matusiak fell asleep in the Lord, which ended a remarkable career of a remarkable Churchman. May his memory be eternal! Immediately, however, I was faced with the question of how I would replace Fr. John's work in the area of communications.

2.3.3.1 Archdeacon Joseph Matusiak. Over time, His Beatitude and I determined that Fr. John's son, Archdeacon Joseph, was well-suited to do this work. In early March 2020, I offered Archdeacon Joseph the position of acting Media Manager, a position that he held until later that summer. In July 2020, Archdeacon Joseph submitted a letter petitioning His Beatitude to accept his resignation as his archdeacon and personal secretary, and from the position of Media Manager, which His Beatitude did. Archdeacon was subsequently released from service of the Orthodox Church in America, and canonically transferred to the Polish Orthodox Church, where he remains a good friend to our Church and regular collaborator.

2.3.3.2 Director of Communications. With the departure of Archdeacon Joseph, we looked to hire someone who could oversee our media – web page, special projects, social media, etc. Before we could find someone, in the interim, Archpriest Thomas Soroka, Fr. John Thetford, and Matushka Jessica Fuhrman pulled together and did excellent updating and maintaining our webpage and social media. Eventually, in the Fall 2021, with the blessing of His Beatitude, and with the consent of His Eminence Archbishop Irénée, the Orthodox Church in America engaged Priest Kyle Parrott as our new acting Director of Communications. Fr. Kyle is a parish priest at All Saints of Alaska parish in Victoria, BC. He is also a graduate of St. Vladimir's Seminary receiving both an MDiv and a ThM. In this position, Fr. Kyle will be taking over from the fathers Matusiak, most recently Archdeacon Joseph, but also Fr. John Matusiak of blessed memory. Needless to say, Fr. Kyle will not and cannot replace Fr. John, who had incredible and unique talents. Fr. Kyle will, no doubt, chart his own path and work effectively in this job. Beginning in September 2021, Fr. Kyle took oversight of our website, social media, and all official communications. At first Fr. Kyle was acting Director. In January 2022, after a review of his work, His Beatitude and I appointed him the Director of Communications.

2.3.4 ORSMA Transition. The final significant transition in the Chancery offices occurred recently when, in early Summer 2021, Ms. Cindy Heise stepped down as the Coordinator for the Office of Review for Sexual Misconduct Allegations. She does, however, remain an ORSMA Consultant, and up until recently she was member of SMPAC. I offer my gratitude for Ms. Heise's work in the Church, which took her to some very dark and difficult places. I am equally grateful that she is both my colleague and a mentor/advisor in matters relating to preventing and investigating sexual misconduct within the Church. Earlier this year, in the Spring, we engaged Ms. Emily Waters as the acting ORSMA Coordinator, filling this very important position in our Church. While Ms. Waters lives on Long Island, she also works remotely and parttime.

2.4 Appreciation. Before turning to other matters, I would be remiss if I did not offer a personal word of appreciation to my colleagues and collaborators at the Chancery, both those presently serving, and those whose transitions I have noted. I know how hard they work, how creatively they work, and how attentively they work in service to God's holy Church. I pray that God bless them all and receive their labors as an acceptable sacrifice to him.

3. Travel, Representation, and External Affairs. During my time as Chancellor, I have traveled with His Beatitude on official visits, and officially have represented him numerous times. These travels have taken me across the United States (I regret that I have yet to visit the Archdiocese of Canada and the Diocese of Mexico), to Russia, Romania, Poland, and to Patriarchates of Constantinople and Jerusalem. My travels on all of these trips have been detailed either in the minutes of the Metropolitan Council, or posted online on oca.org as a news story.

3.1 International Travel. In my first months of being Chancellor, January-February 2019, I accompanied His Beatitude to Moscow for celebrations marking the anniversary of His Holiness Patriarch Kirill's enthronement as Patriarch of Moscow. He and I, and a larger delegation travelled to Moscow again December of that same year for the anniversary of our podvorie, St. Catherine the Great Martyr, which is overseen ably by our representative, Archpriest Daniel Andrejuk. In Summer 2019, I also accompanied His Beatitude on a pilgrimage to Cappadocia, Turkey, that he took at the invitation of and together with His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew. After that event, I continued on to Jerusalem for meetings with officials from the patriarchate. After these trips in 2019, much of my international travel was curtailed due to the pandemic. In the summer of 2021, I accompanied His Grace Bishop Alexei to his former Athonite monastery, Karakallou, where he presided at the celebration of their patronal feast, Sts. Peter and Paul. Prior to going there, His Grace visit the Ecumenical Patriarch and thanked him for granting His Grace a canonical release from Karakallou in order to serve the Orthodox Church in America. More recently, in March and April 2022, I journeyed to the Orthodox Church of Poland and then on to Bucharest, Romania, for meetings with the Orthodox Church there. Both of these visits had as their theme the refugee crisis that the world has faced since the war in Ukraine. For the humanitarian agency of the Orthodox Church of Poland, Eleos, the Orthodox Church in America collected donated over \$700,000 to assist their relief efforts with the refugees streaming into Poland. In Romania, I took with me a donation from the Metropolitan Council of \$10,000 as a fraternal gesture to help them in their work addressing the massive refugee crisis. In addition to my travels, the

Orthodox Church in America also relies on members of the Holy Synod to make inter-Orthodox visits, as well as Fr. Daniel Andrejuk. Fr. Daniel and different hierarchs have visited Ukraine and Churches in the Middle East, as well as in Russia. In my time as Chancellor, His Beatitude has relied more on members of the Holy Synod, Fr. Daniel, and myself for the maintenance of inter-Orthodox affairs.

3.2 Domestic Travel. I have had the good fortune of visiting the Diocese of Alaska two times. As a child of the Orthodox Church in America, growing up and hearing about Alaska and the life of St. Herman, I considered it a great blessing to go there as my first domestic trip as Chancellor, and then again for the pilgrimage in August 2019. As Chancellor, I have been to the Dioceses of the West, the South, the Midwest, New England, Western and Eastern Pennsylvania, and, of course, given my residence, New York and New Jersey. Likewise, I have visited parishes and monasteries in the Romanian Episcopate and in the Albanian Archdiocese. I have visited numerous times all three seminaries of the Orthodox Church in America, and have taught at both St. Vladimir's Seminary and St. Tikhon's. As with my international travel, I have gone to these dioceses both with His Beatitude and by myself, representing him or making private visits. In the course of my domestic travel, I have participated in meetings and events with the other Orthodox Churches in the United States.

3.3 External Affairs. In August 2021, Protopresbyter Leonid Kishkovsky fell asleep in the Lord. Since that time, His Beatitude and I have attempted to learn where and in what ecumenical groups the Orthodox Church in America has participated. Presently, we are looking to bring on a coordinator for our efforts, but we are also relying on the good work of Archpriest Peter Baktis and Protodeacon Sergei Kapral, both of whom remain engaged in various ecumenical gathers. This August and September, His Grace Bishop Andrei of Cleveland, Dr. Paul Meyendorff, Dr. Rebecca Luft, and I will participate in the World Council of Churches Assembly in Karlsruhe, Germany. **4. ORSMA.** Part of my work as Chancellor has been to oversee the Office for Review of Sexual Misconduct Allegations. This work has involved collaborating with Ms. Cindy Heise before she left her position, and now with Ms. Emily Waters. In the interim period before we hired Ms. Waters, I also served as the interim ORSMA Coordinator. Throughout this time, I have also worked with the different ORSMA Consultants making sure that cases are assessed and investigated, if need be, in a timely manner. The end result of many ORSMA cases is the production of a final report that has to be turned over to the local bishop for his consideration and acceptance. Without giving away any confidential details of matters that have been brought before ORSMA, since the last All-American Council in 2018, there have been sixteen cases that ORSMA has done initial assessments or investigated fully. These cases have seen various dispositions with some going to ecclesiastical courts, some were dealt with directly by diocesan bishop, some were found to have no merit after assessment or investigation, and some cases are still under consideration. Further, this office has also assisted at least five parishes within the Orthodox Church in America set in place very specific and very careful policies and detailed protocols that safely allow for Registered Sex Offenders to attend services. In a division of our work at the Chancery, since I oversee ORSMA, Fr. Alessandro coordinates the meetings and work of the Sexual Misconduct Policy Advisory Committee (SMPAC), although he and I are both members of both groups.

4.1 ORSMA Consultants. Together with me and the Secretary of the Orthodox Church in America, the ORSMA Consultants include the following: Ms. Emily Waters, acting ORSMA Coordinator; Mr. Robert Koorey, who is an attorney and advises the group on legal matters; Ms. Cindy Heise; Mr. Bernard Wilson, who has specialized in investigation procedures, and Dr. Albert Rossi, a licensed psychologist who advises the group on mental health issues.

5. Chancery Relocation. Since becoming Chancellor, I have spent a great amount of time working on the relocation of the Chancery of the Orthodox Church in America from Long Island, NY, to the Archdiocese of Washington. This work began already in the Summer of 2019 and has continued apace until the present. It involves a number of deeply related, but ultimately separate elements: 1. The relocation of the archives to a more appropriate and permanent location, 2. The sale of the Westwood property, 3. Finding temporary office space for the Chancery in the Archdiocese, 4. Finding a temporary residence for the metropolitan in the Archdiocese, and 5. The Relocation of the Chancery staff. Since joining the Chancery, Fr. Alessandro has overseen 1, the relocation of the archives, and he will discuss this process in more depth in his report. Likewise, Mr. Gregory Honshul and Mr. Ray Steeb, the chairmen of the Property Committee of the Metropolitan Council will report to the All-American Council on 2-5. His Beatitude will also discuss the overall plan and rationale for the relocation in his address and report. Suffice it to say at this point, the plans for and the process of the relocation has taken place with the complete engagement of both the Metropolitan Council and the Holy Synod. Additionally, the Property Committee of the Metropolitan Council has worked directly with members of the Archdiocese of Washington concerning this relocation in what has been dubbed a Landing Committee, over which Mr. Honshul and Mr. Steeb also head. As of this council, as will be discussed, the Holy Synod and the Metropolitan Council have agreed that the archives of the Orthodox Church in America will move to St. Vladimir's Seminary. The Orthodox Church in America will retain ownership of the archives, but the seminary will take custody of them. Both His Beatitude and Fr. Alessandro have also relocated to the Archdiocese. Likewise, temporary office space for the Chancery has been secured and we will begin moving in after the 20th All-American Council. I anticipate that over the course of Fall 2022, we will continue this transition and close down fully the operations in Syosset, and open fully the Chancery offices in the Archdiocese. Of course, this plan means that there will be some months where the Chancery work flow will be somewhat fluid and that we will face new and unexpected challenges. I am confident, however, that as we move and make this relocation, we will do what is needed to keep on top of the work of the Chancery.

6. Youth Report/Work. As Andrew Smith mentions in his report, at the end of the 19th All-American Council, \$89,600 was pledged by members of the council for the purpose of hiring a fulltime youth director. As Mr. Smith reports, only \$57,657 was collected in the fund over the last four years. In Fall 2018, the Metropolitan Council endorsed a 1- year program that would consider the feasibility of and the need for a full-time youth director/coordinator for the Orthodox Church in America. The Metropolitan Council authorized use of funds from the money collected at the 19th All-American Council for this purpose. As Mr. Smith reports, \$11,781 was spent on stipends and travel (exclusively in 2019), which leaves a current balance of \$45,876.

6.1 Youth Report. Out of that exploration on the feasibility for a fulltime Youth Director, a report was prepared by my son, Dimitrios Rentel, in early 2020, after he had spent that previous summer visiting Church summer camps across the United States. At these camps and also through the use of surveys, Dimitrios solicited input directly from children, young adults, parents, and clergy on what was desired with regard to Youth Work in the Church. As I say, this work was done in response to the pledges that were made at the end of the 19th All-American Council to support Youth Work in the Church. In the midst of numerous discussions on what to do with the money that was raised, and after struggling to find a good answer, Archdeacon Joseph Matusiak, then secretary to His Beatitude, came upon the inspired idea of having someone go out and ask the Church directly what would be the best thing(s) to do. The resulting report did not attempt to solve anything, or provide one answer, but rather to collate the answers that were received, and then present them in a synthetic manner. The responses to the surveys were extensive and represent a huge digital file. Dimitrios summarized the responses in the appendices to his report.

6.1.1 Presentation to the Metropolitan Council. Dima presented this report to the Metropolitan Council at its Regular Spring 2020 Session right before the pandemic. The Metropolitan Council then had a discussion on the report that was led by Mr. Steven Christoforou, Director, Youth & Young Adult Ministries, of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. The Metropolitan Council engaged well with this report and had a lengthy discussion that involved both Mr. Rentel and Mr. Christoforou. An ad hoc subcommittee of the Metropolitan Council was formed to discuss this matter further. All efforts unfortunately came to a halt amidst the pandemic. His Beatitude and I had planned on having Dimitrios present it formally to the Holy Synod at its Regular Spring 2020 Session, but an in-person meeting in Spring 2020 did not happen because of the pandemic. Further, the meetings of the Holy Synod during that year were taken up almost exclusively by pandemic and other urgent matters. As such, there was no good time to present this report at one of the different meetings that the Holy Synod, and so the work that began with Mr. Rentel's report stopped. His report was posted online in the Fall 2021. This matter, youth work within the Church, remains one of my greatest disappointments as Chancellor. I acknowledge that it is not a subject that I have a feel for or knowledge of. Nevertheless, together with the Church, I will have to seek ways in the next triennium to foster development in this area.

7. Anniversary Celebrations. As had been announced, over the course of 2020, we were to have had three major celebrations for the fiftieth anniversary of the Glorification of St. Herman, and the reception of the *Tomos* of Autocephaly. Unfortunately, the pandemic forced the cancellation of the anniversary celebrations that had been announced for that year. It is unclear when we might yet be able to mark these occasions. With regard to other initiatives that were announced in conjunction with the anniversary celebrations, we were able to see to the publication of the necrology of the departed clergy and Church leaders. A PDF of this was made available in February 2020 for use on Memorial Saturdays during lent. We received corrections and suggestions from the time it was published. It was published as book later that same year and was mailed to all our parishes, monasteries, and institutions. Other initiatives have failed to materialize for various reasons. That our anniversary year did not happen the

way we hoped, and that the different initiatives did not come about, likewise remains a disappointment for me.

8. Final Word. In my position, I am honored to serve His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon, the members of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America, the Metropolitan Council, indeed, the entirety of Orthodox Church in America. I am grateful to my colleagues at the Chancery, for the collaboration I experience in my work with the Diocesan Chancellors, and for the patience of my family as I try and fulfill the myriad of tasks I have as Chancellor.

Secretary's Report

Report of the Secretary of the Orthodox Church in America 20th All-American Council July 18-22, 2022

OVERVIEW. It is a blessing and an honor to present my first report as Secretary of the Orthodox Church in America to the All-American Council. My work at the Chancery started about two years ago, first as the Executive Assistant, then Acting Secretary, and finally as Secretary when I was confirmed by the Holy Synod in May 2021.

The last three years have been a time of transition with respect to the operations of the Chancery and the administrative structure of the office. The position of Secretary was vacant for almost two years, and the office was reconfigured following the restructuring plan of the Chancery Restructuring Committee in 2018. As His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon and the three officers noted at the last meeting of the Metropolitan Council that discussed one of the proposed statute amendments presented to this 20th All-American Council, the work of the Chancery following the restructuring has been extremely positive and productive and is working very smoothly.

While I will report to the Council on a number of specific areas that are generally under the purview of the Office of the Secretary, I also want to take the opportunity to reflect—though briefly—on the unique nature of the work of Church administration. Like most of my predecessors, I have transitioned to this position from parish ministry where the theme of this 20th All-American Council, “Becoming Vessels of Grace,” is, perhaps, more immediately evident and self-explanatory, especially when it is considered within the greater scope of vocations. Can we say the same for Church administration? To be sure, administration is not the most appealing aspect of Church work for many. Understandably, many would rather spend most of their time on other aspects of ministry. But is Church administration just a necessary task that must be endured in order to fulfill requirements and mandates? If so, what does Church administration have to do with being and becoming vessels of grace?

From the start, however, I would be remiss if I did not begin by extending a note of thanksgiving to the many people I work with at the Chancery. First and foremost, to His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon for his leadership and pastoral example. To our Chancellor, Archpriest Alexander Rentel, who works tirelessly for our beloved Orthodox Church in America. Our Treasurer, Mr. Andrew Smith, for his professional and diligent work. My many thanks go also to the dedicated staff that works selflessly in support of the Office of the Metropolitan, the Holy Synod, as well as the Church at large, both at the physical Chancery as well as remotely. My deep gratitude goes also to those who have served the Chancery before as officers and Chancery staff and who have now reposed, retired, or moved on to other positions in the Church.

There is a lot that happens on a daily basis that keeps the Chancery staff constantly busy. Some of that work is self-evident but much happens, so-to-say, behind the scenes and is generally not publicly known. In fact, this speaks to one of the peculiar aspects of Church Administration. It is a work that supports the preaching of the Gospel in the background, quietly, in humility, and always oriented toward the building up of Christ's vineyard. This may sound superfluous to even mention, but when administrators are so focused on processes and procedures, it might be the very first thing that is forgotten. I believe the Chancery staff of the Orthodox Church in America strives to carry out its work humbly and quietly and avoiding any form of self-aggrandizement. We give one another the constant reminder that we are here to be a resource and facilitate the work of the Metropolitan, the Holy Synod, the Metropolitan Council, and the Church at large.

The work of administration is necessary for the functioning of the Church not merely to support the Church as an institution in our modern landscape with its various financial and legal requirements. Rather, this work—a ministry in itself—is necessary to directly support the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For the Office of the Secretary, this may mean: ensuring that our parishes and institutions maintain their 501C3 status so they may direct most of their donations to ministry; overseeing the background check requirements and compliance with the sexual misconduct policy to provide that safety, especially for our children—this being of the highest priority, and that scandals be avoided; maintaining a good record of our documents and minutes so that good order may be maintained and our Church, as a whole, may continue to function effectively as an autocephalous Church; overseeing the communication department so that various press releases, stories, and important information are distributed promptly and professionally; working closely with our tech manager to ensure that we take advantage of various technology to lower our operational costs and become more efficient in our use of information technology; organizing and facilitating various canonically and statutorily necessary meetings of the Holy Synod, Metropolitan Council, Chancery staff, and overseeing various aspects of the All-American Council; overseeing the Archives and the work of the Archivist to ensure our history and files are preserved and made accessible; overseeing several aspects of the management of the Chancery property which serves not only as an office space for the Chancery staff but also as the repository of Church documents and files as well as the venue for meetings and the welcoming of various guest and dignitaries.

To such ministry are Chancery administrators called, and this specific calling is the way they are serving the Lord's vineyard while striving to become vessels of grace. At the same time, since their work is one that facilitates the ministry of others, their ministry is to help others to fulfil the same call of becoming vessels of grace within their particular ministry.

To the best of our abilities, the office strives to fulfill our stewardship calling and operate steadily and efficiently, always in a professional manner. That is not always an easy task and is challenging for a variety of reasons, among which are the workload and the multitude of tasks to which this office is called to respond to on a daily basis. This is a small office with limited staffing in its present configuration and with several of its employees working part time.

Once again, I am thankful and humbled to serve our beloved Orthodox Church in America as its Secretary. It is a ministry for which it is hard to be qualified—all I can commit is to serve to the best of my abilities. It is a ministry with many challenges, demands, pressure, and, yes, its fair share of disappointments and frustrations. Many of the calls, questions, and requests that our office receives are about “problems” to address and to solve, or as my good colleague Barry Migyanko says, fires to put out until you are called to another, perhaps, bigger fire. Yet, it is a work that gives the unique and privileged opportunity to have a comprehensive perspective on our Church and the work of the Gospel happening in the many corners of our beloved Church.

In this report I want to highlight a number of areas that fall, to a large extent, under the purview of the Office of the Secretary. I would, however, encourage the delegates to visit the Metropolitan Council page on our website and read the various reports which contain more detailed information.

CHANCERY BUILDING. His Beatitude and Fr. Alexander address the topic of the relocation of the Chancery to the greater Washington, DC area more in-depth. Since the decision of the relocation was approved at the Spring Sessions of the Holy Synod and Metropolitan Council, I have mostly focused on the first two steps of this process, i.e. the relocation of His Beatitude, of my family, and locating a temporary office space for the Chancery.

One of the responsibilities of the Secretary is to oversee the management of the Chancery property. While the office has stayed operational at Westwood, maintenance has remained necessary with a building that continues to age and require attention. Overall, the general maintenance has been limited without major expenditures in the attempt to preserve our finances especially in the expectation of the full Chancery relocation.

In preparation for the move but also in the attempt to declutter many of the areas of the building, Susan Wisnewski, Accounting Manager, Fr. Larry Soper, Executive Assistant, and I have worked on all four floors of the Westwood property over the past year, decluttering rooms and closets, and disposing of broken and unnecessary items that have been collected for the past few decades.

We have also completed a few minor projects to prevent water from entering the basement as this has been an issue for years after heavy rains. Having said this, the basement—which is where the Archives of the Orthodox Church in America have been stored for approximately 60 years—remains a highly unfit location for the archival treasurer of our Church, not only because of the limited space available to catalogue, process, and organize the material, but especially because of the humidity and unstable temperature due to heating pipes that run along the ceiling.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY. Over the last couple of years, we have made a number of technology changes and improvements. We have determined the need to foster and maintain a dexterous office, one in which we can easily work in person, remotely, or on the road.

Some of these changes have included moving to a virtual server (BOX.com), adopting a highly efficient internal communication system (Slack), moving to a virtual phone system (MightyCall), a cheaper and more effective Payroll system (Accudata), a better and cheaper internet service (Fios), and a new and more responsive database system (Airtable).

These changes have been implemented for a variety of reasons: they represent a more efficient and effective way for office operation; to a great extent, they allow seamless remote work for when we travel and also for some of our staff who work across North America; they are much more cost-effective.

Furthermore, because the registration system utilized for the last two AACs was no longer available, we had to move to a new platform, Evanttia, which is proving very effective.

I am especially grateful to Father John Schroedel, Barry Migyanko, and Susan Wisnewski who are to be commended for these improvements and dedicated work.

Over the last six months, with the help of a seminarian intern, we have also digitized the vast majority of the parish and clergy folders. We maintain the physical files but they are now also safely and securely stored in our virtual server.

COMMUNICATION & PUBLICATIONS. About a year ago and after the position was vacant for several months, we engaged a new Communication Director for the Orthodox Church in America. Priest Kyle Parrott has joined our team working remotely from Victoria, BC. Father Kyle and I work together on press releases, articles, statements, website, social media platforms, and various other communication efforts. Over the last six months, we have especially focused on our social media efforts making our online presence more robust which has included starting a Telegram channel.

In the coming months, our attention will be directed more intentionally towards the website which is in need of both a redesign and reorganization.

The Office of the Secretary continues to oversee the publication of the OCA Desk Calendar which remains a publication much appreciated by many in our Church. A copy continues to be mailed to each clergy, both active and retired, and widows of the Orthodox Church in America. Additional copies are also available for a donation. Unlike previous editions, beginning with the 2021 edition, the Desk Calendar does not include significant diocesan and national events such as diocesan assemblies, seminary commencement dates, Holy Synod and Metropolitan Council meetings, etc. In order to facilitate the communication of the most up-to-date event dates, in early Fall 2020, oca.org was enhanced with a web calendar that features special commemorations and various events from the Central Administration and the Departments of the Orthodox Church in America, as well as events from Dioceses, Seminaries, and other Institutions.

In December 2020, and in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the reception of the Tomos of Autocephaly from the Russian Orthodox Church, we published the Updated Diptychs of the Orthodox

Church in America (A Commemorative List of the Departed Servants of Orthodoxy in North America: Diptychs of those who have fallen asleep in the Lord). This is an updated list of departed clergy, monastics, and prominent laity who have labored in America from the days of the Alaskan mission to the present day. A copy has been mailed to every parish, monastery, and institution of the Orthodox Church in America.

At the end of 2020, we issued another publication, the Encyclical by the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America entitled, “We Rejoice Even in Tribulation,” An Encyclical of Hope. The Holy Synod offered this work out of love and gratitude to its faithful and as an encouragement for the year to come in light of the pandemic, political polarization, economic anxiety, and civil unrest.

OPERATIONS. One of the main duties of the Secretary is the planning and management of various meetings. There are numerous meetings to schedule every month with committees, boards, various bodies within the Church, and individuals. Many of these meetings have taken place via teleconference since the beginning of the pandemic, but in-person gatherings have largely resumed by now. Whether in person or virtually, each meeting requires a substantial amount of preparation from this office.

Without a doubt, this 20th All-American Council is the biggest event in the past 4 years, and one that has required an enormous amount of work, not only from our office but from many others in the Church. I am deeply thankful to our Council Manager, Deacon Peter Ilchuk, for his diligent, precise, and dedicated work. Dn Peter has worked tirelessly to ensure that the logistics of this event are properly in place. I am particularly thankful to Barry Migyanko for his attentive and diligent work in the registration process for this AAC.

Another event worth noting is the one that took place the week of October 18-22, 2021, in Cleveland, OH. Three major meetings took place: 2021 Fall Session of the Metropolitan Council, the Expanded Joint Meeting of the Holy Synod and Metropolitan Council, and the 2021 Fall Session of the Holy Synod. The joint meeting saw the participation of more than 60 attendees and represented the first in-person meeting in over a year and a half. It offered an opportunity to members of the Holy Synod, members of the Metropolitan Council, Diocesan Chancellors, Monastic Superiors, and representatives from the Seminaries, to come together and reflect on the theme of vocation in preparation for this All-American Council.

ARCHIVES. As alluded to earlier, some of the Chancery staff has worked with Alexis Liberovsky, the OCA Archivist, in the basement decluttering and cleaning various areas of the Archives. We have also brought upstairs items (books, icon cards, etc.) that are clearly not Archival materials but that were sent to the basement for lack of another suitable place. We acknowledge that for many years the basement of Westwood has not only served to house the Archives, but it has been used as most “basements” are typically used. Although more work is to be done, we have made considerable progress.

In this section of my report, I want to offer a short synopsis of events surrounding the Archives in order to give a framework for the resolution that was approved by the Metropolitan Council and the Holy Synod of Bishops at their respective 2022 Spring Sessions.

In the discussion on the relocation, it is important to consider that the Archives of the Orthodox Church in America moved to the basement of Westwood sometime in the 1960s, a few years after the Church acquired the property. The basement was always intended to be a temporary location for the Archival treasure of the Church, especially since it was—and continues to be—neither an honorable place nor suitable because of its humidity, high temperatures due to pipes running along the ceiling, and water infiltration from the basement windows. The Church has engaged in various conversations over the years regarding its relocation. The Archives Advisory Committee, established in 2013 “to assess the housing, preservation and access needs of the OCA Archives and to develop strategic solutions” (Committee Mission Statement), considered temporary measures in the current basement in order to improve preservation conditions until a new appropriate facility could be built. After receiving proceeds from the McGuire Family Charitable Remainder Trust in 2017, bids were solicited for a renovation of the basement for which the bids kept going up and eventually became too high. The possibility of a new building on the Westwood property was also acknowledged as a hope for the distant future. This was finally deemed out of the financial reach of the Orthodox Church in America.

At its 2020 Fall Meeting, the Metropolitan Council adopted a resolution that tasked the Archives Advisory Committee to issue a Request For Proposals (RFP) for the Archives of the Orthodox Church in America. The RFP was published on the OCA website on May 20, 2021 and was shared through different platforms such as the Society of American Archivists, the Association of Research Libraries, the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies, and the American Theological Library Association.

The RFP indicated the need to find an institution willing to house the Archives with the ownership remaining within the Orthodox Church in America. The institution willing to house the Archives would be asked to provide staffing to support the Archivist, seek grants, resume the digitization project, provide open access to both scholars and non-academic, as well as support the Church Administration with material requests and historical analysis even with short notice.

The initial deadline to submit a proposal was July 20. We received only four proposals in response to the RFP: St. Vladimir Orthodox Theological Seminary, St. Tikhon Orthodox Theological Seminary, Miami University (Oxford, OH), and Alex Liberovsky, OCA Archivist. The Archives Advisory Committee received and reviewed these proposals and discussed them via teleconference on September 28, 2021.

At the Fall 2021 Session of the Metropolitan council in Cleveland, OH, a motion was presented to limit consideration of proposals received to those from Miami University of Ohio and St. Vladimir's Seminary. That motion was carried with fourteen (14) votes in favor, thirteen (13) opposed votes and two (2) abstentions. As noted in the Minutes of the same Session, Metropolitan Tikhon announced that due to the split vote regarding proposals received for relocation of the OCA Archives, this matter would

be deferred to the consideration of the Holy Synod for a final decision. Unfortunately, the Holy Synod's Session that followed the Metropolitan Council was truncated because of a COVID case. At the Fall Special Meeting which took place via teleconference in November, I informed the Council that, upon my return from the meeting in Cleveland, I was contacted by Dr. Scott Kenworthy of Miami University, OH, who related that the University was no longer able to receive the OCA Archives for financial reasons. At the same time, I acknowledged the November press release from St. Vladimir's that stated the vote of its Board of Trustees to relocate the Seminary to another part of the country. Already back in November following the press release, Fr. Chad informed me that the Seminary's interest in the Archives was still strong and if the Seminary were to relocate in the years to come, they would offer the Archives an even better building in the new campus that SVOTS would construct. I note that the members of the Metropolitan Council did not express concerns when I discussed the possibility of the Seminary's relocation to another part of the country.

Acknowledging that the proposal from Alexis Liberovsky was not viable mostly for financial reasons, and noting minimal progress on the possible building of the Library at St. Tikhon's Seminary, the proposal from St. Vladimir's Seminary remained the only viable option at that time. Additionally, the proposal from St. Vladimir's is the one that responds more fully to the criteria indicated in the RFP among the three proposals. In consultation with Fr. Alexander Rentel, with the blessing of His Beatitude, and in preparation of the discussion on the Archives at this Spring 2022 Session, in mid-January I reached out to a number of Metropolitan Council members who live driving distance from St. Vladimir's Seminary to poll their interest in a possible visit to the Florovsky Library where the Seminary proposed the OCA Archives to be housed. Popadija Katherine Vitko, Matushka Evelyn Kreta, and Gregory Honshul responded to our invitation, and we planned our visit for Monday, January 31. The purpose of this visit was to see the physical space offered by the seminary and ask questions about their proposal. The visit was very positive, and we were pleasantly surprised to immediately note that the Seminary is both offering a lot more room to house the Archives and is willing to take much more than what they initially stated in their proposal. Specifically, they are offering five rooms located on the ground floor to the rear of the building, with the largest being approximately twenty-five by fifty feet, and the smaller rooms, each about twelve by eight feet. Welcoming us to the Florovsky Library were Father Chad Hatfield, SVOTS President, Dr Alex Tudorie, Academic Dean, and Danielle Earl, Librarian. We noted that the space offered is in good condition and climate-controlled, and it was our general understanding that it would provide sufficient room to house the Archives. Although we knew that the initial proposal received was intended to simply initiate the conversation and not to set final parameters, we were glad to hear that St. Vladimir's is willing to take more than what they initially stated, and that regarding the digitization, they are willing to also digitize any video and audio files as long as these materials have historical value and are indeed part of the Archives.

After our visit, two members of the Metropolitan Council, Popadija Katherine Vitko and Gregory Honshul, wrote a short report to share with the rest of the Council. Additionally, they put forward a resolution (attached at the end of this report) for consideration deciding in principle to relocate the Archives to St. Vladimir's pending the blessing of the Holy Synod, as well as the consideration of many aspects of this relocation which would need to be articulated in a memorandum of understanding

which is currently being drafted with the plan to present it sometime this summer to the Metropolitan Council. It was noted that if the Metropolitan Council were to vote in favor of this resolution, later with the approval of the Holy Synod, there would be a number of steps that will need to be taken: 1) The Central Administration would have to determine exactly what will need to be retained by our office and moved to Washington, D.C.; 2) A delegation from St. Vladimir's will have to visit the Archives again and determine if there is any part of the collection that they would not be interested in taking; 3) Consider the question of ownership and management of the Archives; 4) Consider a number of provisions to be included in the agreement were the Seminary ever to dissolve, etc.; 5) Consider the funds earmarked for the Archives and determine if they can be used to facilitate the relocation and the purchase of shelving units. There will likely be other aspects to consider but these are five of the major ones.

As I noted in my report to the Metropolitan Council and Holy Synod, from our visit, it seems to me that St. Vladimir's is a strong proposal not only because it offers a safe and appropriate space for the Archives, but it is also a Stavropegial Institution of the Orthodox Church in America with Metropolitan Tikhon serving as the Chairman of the Board. The Seminary houses the most extensive Orthodox library in the English language worldwide, and the Archives would find a suitable environment where they could be of service to the larger Church and the academic world even more than they have been able to over the past sixty years. Our discussion on the Archives relocation should first and foremost focus on what is best for this precious treasure. It seems that the Florovsky Library would indeed offer worthy and necessary preservation, visibility, and access to the Archives of the Orthodox Church in America.

At its Spring 2022 Session, the Metropolitan Council was vastly in favor of this resolution approving it with only three members abstaining from the vote. Subsequently, the Holy Synod also blessed the decision of the Metropolitan Council to relocate the Archives to St. Vladimir's.

As mentioned earlier, the memorandum of understanding is currently being drafted. The final approval of this memorandum by the Metropolitan Council and the Holy Synod will be necessary to finalize the project.

CONCLUSION. There are a number of other important tasks under the purview of the Office of the Secretary and in which I am involved on an ongoing basis: I maintain the 501C3 master list and work with a number of parishes on their tax-exempt status; I prepare and maintain the Chancery Monthly Digest that is distributed every month to the Metropolitan Council, Diocesan Chancellors, and heads of Stavropegial Institutions; I manage the web calendar accessible through the home page of our website; I assist the Chancellor and the Metropolitan in a number of other tasks.

As mentioned earlier, the relocation of the Chancery has been and continues to be one of the major projects of our office. By the Grace of God, we have made substantial steps forward in this direction and the plan that was approved two years ago is finally being implemented. Even before I joined the Chancery staff, both His Beatitude and Fr. Alexander discussed with me at length the plan and, most

especially, the vision behind the relocation of the Metropolitan and the Chancery office. Above all, the purpose is for the Central Administration to be immersed in the life of the Church. This means a number of different things but for me it means, first and foremost, that the work of our office be not disjointed from the everyday life of the Church that takes place at parish level. If disconnected from parish life, church administration can become an end to itself and the administrators risk becoming mere bureaucrats. On that note, His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon has blessed me to begin serving at one of his local missions, All Saints of North America Mission in Alexandria that was established by Archpriest Michael Koblosh of blessed memory. While I will continue my duties as Secretary, I will also serve as pastor of this mission. A couple of months ago, I felt particularly encouraged when reading a Chancellor's report to the Holy Synod written by the late Protopresbyter Daniel Hubiak in the late 1980s where Fr. Daniel shared that he felt energized and rejuvenated after he began serving again as acting rector of a local parish after a long pastoral hiatus due to his administrative duties. Parish work strengthened and inspired his administrative duties. In fact, most administrators in the various Orthodox Churches around the world hold pastoral responsibilities at local parishes. This is not by accident but specifically designed to prevent that disconnection between administration and Church life.

I ask the prayers of the Council for a prosperous and peaceful transition to the Archdiocese of Washington for our beloved Metropolitan and the Chancery office. May this be pleasing to God and unto the building up of His Church, and may this help us become true vessels of grace.

In Christ,

Priest Alessandro Margheritino
Secretary of the Orthodox Church in America

Treasurer's Report

Report of the Treasurer of the Orthodox Church in America 20th All-American Council July 18-22, 2022

Your Beatitude, Your Eminences, Your Graces, Esteemed Delegates to the 20th All American Council:

Greetings in Christ!

As I write this report I am approaching the third anniversary of my confirmation as Treasurer of the Orthodox Church in America. This has been a time of great learning, growth, and challenge – and a time of deep vocational fulfillment. I'm most grateful to His Beatitude for nominating me for this role, to the Metropolitan Council for its endorsing me, and to the Holy Synod for its confirming me.

My functioning in the Treasurer role – reconfigured as part-time and remote – would not be possible without the support of my colleagues and friends at the Chancery: Fr. Alexander Rentel, Fr. Alessandro Margheritino, the Chancery staff. I've leaned heavily on them. This arrangement also requires a very strong accounting professional on the ground, handling the day-to-day transactions in accounts payable, accounts receivable, payroll, etc. Susan Wisnewski has handled this role, and much more, admirably.

I stepped into a very healthy situation, from a financial management standpoint. My predecessor, Melanie Ringa, left clear, well-maintained books and processes. She took on the role of Treasurer of the OCA at a time of great challenge and instability and left me with a house in good order, with a solid foundation and strong bones. For that, I'm most grateful.

Financial Highlights: 2018 - present

The period from 2018 to the present has been one of steadily improving financial health of the central administration of the Orthodox Church in America.

Exhibit A shows comparative Balance Sheets (from audited financial statements) at 12/31/2018, 12/31/2019, and 12/31/2020, as well as an unaudited Balance Sheet at 12/31/2021. The 2021 audit is underway at the time of this writing. Key highlights include:

- Increase in investments from \$2.25M in 2018 to \$3.54M in 2021
- Increase in total assets from \$3.72M in 2018 to \$6.44M in 2021
- Increase in total net assets from \$3.53M in 2018 to \$6.0M in 2021
- Increase in *undesigned* net assets from \$0.148M in 2018 to \$1.525M in 2021.

(Note: Undesignated net assets is an important measure of financial health as it generally constitutes what we might consider 'operating reserves'. I deem a healthy operating reserve to consist of an amount that would cover at least six months of operating expenses and \$1.525M puts us above that metric.)

Exhibit B shows comparative Statements of Activity (from audited financial statements) for the years ended 12/31/2018, 12/31/2019, and 12/31/2020, as well as an unaudited Statement of Activity for the year ended 12/31/2021. The 2021 audit is underway at the time of this writing. Key highlights include:

- Diocesan contributions to the central administration have held relatively constant (increasing from \$1.72M in 2018 to \$1.81M in 2021). During this time, the contribution percentage applied to diocesan net operating budgets has decreased for most territorial dioceses from 46% in 2018 to 40% in 2021.
- In 2018, we received over \$500K in grant funding from the Lilly Foundation for the Thriving in Ministry initiative.
- Stewards of the OCA results have been: \$74,703 (2018), \$76,729 (2019), \$78,850 (2020), \$125,436 (2021)
- There have been several generous gifts totaling \$210K from a single donor, restricted for use in the Mission Planting Grants program, along with several significant unrestricted donations.
- During 2020 and 2021, expenses declined significantly due largely to pandemic-driven curtailment of travel, lodging, and meeting expenses.

19th All-American Council - Youth Director Fund

At the 19th All-American Council, a Youth Director Fund was established with numerous pledges made by delegates to the Council. Of the \$89,600 pledged, \$57,657 has been collected in the fund over the last four years. In Fall 2018, the Metropolitan Council endorsed a 1-year pilot program to establish the feasibility of a full-time youth director/coordinator for the OCA and authorized use of funds from the Youth Director Fund for this purpose. For this 1-year pilot program, \$11,781 was spent on stipends and travel (exclusively in 2019, prior to the pandemic), which leaves a balance of \$45,876.

2022 Fundraising for Ukrainian Refugees

From February 28, 2022 to April 8, 2022, the OCA collected over \$720K for the Polish Orthodox Church to assist with its efforts to support Ukrainian refugees through its humanitarian agency ELEOS. The first disbursement from this fundraising effort (\$557K) was sent in mid-March 2022 and the second disbursement (\$165K) was sent in early May 2022.

Major Projects

Since I began my role as Treasurer in 2019, we have undertaken several significant projects.

- Change in accounting software (Quickbooks) and external auditor (Satty Levine)

For over a decade the Chancery had maintained a license to a software suite from Blackbaud, a leader in fund accounting and fundraising software for not-for-profits. While this suite served us well and allowed us to maintain a high degree of sophistication in our financial reporting, its benefits were quickly being outweighed by its costs. The version we operated hadn't been supported with updates since 2012 (with no anticipated future updates) and offered very few opportunities for substantive training. Blackbaud had begun placing emphasis on a newer version of their software which would require migration to a web-based platform with cloud

storage and a much higher annual maintenance fee. With the approval of the Metropolitan Council, we migrated to QuickBooks, which had recently improved its offerings for not-for-profit entities subject to external audits.

At the Spring 2020 meeting, the Metropolitan Council authorized Chancery staff to engage a new auditor, Satty, Levine and Ciacco, CPAs, P.C., to conduct the external audit of the OCA's 2019 financial statements. This firm has subsequently conducted the 2020 audit and are currently engaged in the 2021 audit.

- Endowment funds and spending rate policy

Over the years, donors have given just over \$1 million in permanently restricted (i.e., endowed) funds that are intended to exist for the benefit of the OCA in perpetuity. Endowed funds are invested with the understanding that a modest amount of net earnings from the funds will be available for release from restriction each year. The OCA has roughly 40 such endowed funds that range from \$500 to \$150,000 in permanently restricted value; some have purpose restrictions (e.g., theological education) while others have no purpose restriction. The current value of the investments associated with these endowments is much higher than the value of the initial gifts (in the \$2.2 million range), because the funds had not been used in a number of years.

I recognized in 2019 that we had established a healthy ratio of investment value to permanently restricted value. Given the planned gradual decrease in the assessment percentage to a number of the OCA's dioceses and other budgetary constraints, I then proposed that, beginning in fiscal year 2020, we begin applying a modest spending rate to the endowments and releasing the amount from restriction into the general operating budget each year. The industry standard for such a spending rate is 3-5% of endowed value, which should allow the funds to continue growing over time (i.e., the average annual market return over time should exceed this rate, despite downturns in individual years). We would only apply this rate to—and release funds from—endowed funds for which we've met purpose restrictions. Staff's proposal that we adopt a spending rate of 3% of the total endowment value at the prior year end for release in the budget year was adopted by the Metropolitan Council and has guided our practice since.

- Pandemic response

- Diocesan Relief – Deferral of Contributions to the Central Administration

In March 2020, as the gravity of the COVID-19 global pandemic became apparent, I worked closely with the Finance & Investment Committee of the Metropolitan Council and, in turn, the full Metropolitan Council to ascertain the needs of the church at all levels. We anticipated significant financial difficulty for parishioners and, in turn, parishes and dioceses. We sought to mitigate the impact of anticipated financial burdens and cash shortages for dioceses and parishes and developed a program

allowing each diocese to make an application to reduce monthly contributions to the Central Administration, deferring payment to the following year. While the financial impacts were not as dire as we feared, our initiative provided relief to two dioceses in the OCA.

- Paycheck Protection Program Loan & Forgiveness

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was passed by Congress and signed into law by the President in March 2020 in response to the economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic. A significant component of the CARES Act was the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which consisted of loans (convertible to grants, i.e., “forgiven”) to cover 2.5 months of payroll for qualifying employers. OCA administration, in consultation with legal counsel and the Finance and Investments Committee of the Metropolitan Council, determined that the OCA qualified for PPP loan funding. Further, the OCA administration sought and was granted the authority by the Metropolitan Council to explore and enter into such a loan agreement.

Amid weeks of uncertainty and ambiguity about the PPP program and how to apply, staff remained vigilant, investigating the latest guidance issued by the Small Business Administration (SBA) and our commercial banker (TD Bank). Finally, on April 22, 2020, I signed a PPP promissory note with TD Bank on behalf of the OCA in the amount of \$194,720.00, with funds received shortly thereafter. This amount represented 2.5 months of the OCA’s covered payroll. In late 2020, we applied for and received forgiveness of this loan in accordance with the guidance by the SBA.

Looking Ahead

Funding the central administration of the OCA at a time of high and increasing inflation, as well as general macroeconomic instability, poses a significant challenge for the foreseeable future. The operating budget of the central administration is already trimmed of excess, leaving little opportunity to cut expenses, and its sources of revenue are limited. Our task is to continue the funding model established at the last All-American Council, while minimizing the risk of structural problems with the operating budget.

Further, a significant part of my work in recent months has been helping to manage the financial component of the imminent move of the Chancery offices from Long Island, NY to Washington, D.C. I anticipate that this move will require the strategic use of operating reserves and, through the budgeting process, we have adequately planned for this. Nonetheless, I think that the move will eventually result in a net benefit to the operating budget of the church.

Final Thoughts

As I conclude my report on the financial affairs of the church for the 20th All-American Council, I'd like to reiterate my gratitude to His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon, Fr. Alexander Rentel, Fr. Alessandro Margheritino, and all the Chancery staff.

It deserves noting that Fr. Thomas Moore, a long-time member of the Metropolitan Council and many-time delegate to the All-American Council, is chiefly responsible for my being in this role in that he's chiefly responsible for my being Orthodox! Over a decade ago, he fielded the questions of an inquisitive-yet-suspicious Divinity School graduate and guided this serious seeker into the Orthodox Church. I can't thank him enough for his guidance and support. His successor in Columbia, S.C., Fr. Ignatius Green, and his family, have likewise been great blessings to me and my family.

And, my family: my wife, Shannon, and my two wild boys, Nikolas and Kassian. Their love and forbearance are unmatched and this guides me in all that I do, but especially in my commitment and service to Christ and his holy church.

Andrew D. Smith
Treasurer

EXHIBIT A
ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA
Comparative Balance Sheets - 2018 - 2021

Source: Audited Financial Statements, except where indicated

	A	B	C	D	E
		12/31/2018	12/31/2019	12/31/2020	Unaudited 12/31/2021
ASSETS					
Cash & Cash Equivalents - Operating		271,319	383,990	1,159,166	1,526,783
Cash - Restricted		124,998	415,360	351,108	768,663
Investments		2,250,586	2,728,755	3,121,913	3,536,745
Accounts Receivable, net		193,512	196,386	164,957	112,186
Grants Receivable		345,700	-	-	-
Note Receivable		150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000
Prepaid Expense		21,777	3,500	3,500	21,676
Fixed Assets, net of depreciation		364,832	341,159	315,287	327,510
Total Assets		3,722,724	4,219,150	5,265,931	6,443,563
LIABILITIES					
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses		46,673	69,314	89,455	41,454
Retirement Obligation		37,552	37,552	37,552	37,552
Annuity and Unitrust Agreements		109,479	106,527	100,527	94,238
Deferred/Unearned Revenue (AAC)					267,812
Total Liabilities		193,704	213,393	227,534	441,056
NET ASSETS					
Undesignated		147,967	245,606	991,039	1,525,805
Invested in Property and Equipment		364,832	341,159	315,287	327,510
Total Without Donor Restrictions		512,799	586,765	1,306,326	1,853,315
Total With Donor Restrictions		3,016,221	3,418,992	3,732,071	4,149,192
TOTAL NET ASSETS		3,529,020	4,005,757	5,038,397	6,002,507

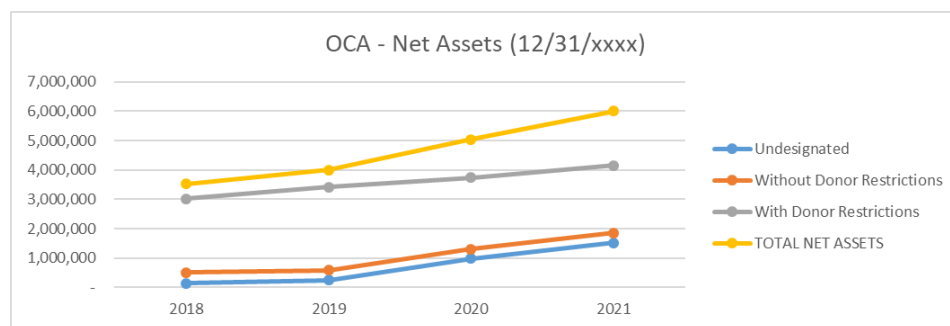


EXHIBIT B**ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA****Income Statements - 2018 - 2021**

Source: Audited Financial Statements, except where indicated

	A	B	C	D	E
		12/31/2018	12/31/2019	12/31/2020	Unaudited 12/31/2021
1 REVENUE (Unrestricted & Restricted)					
2 Diocesan Contributions		1,722,724	1,725,504	1,762,805	1,806,319
3 General Contributions (incl. SOCA)		188,664	94,706	165,778	379,207
4 Grants		519,700	-	-	-
5					
6 All-American Council income		422,436	-	-	-
7 Interest & Dividends		57,605	58,572	37,392	47,830
8 Investment Income, net		(299,315)	421,296	369,806	393,045
9 Other Revenue		29,428	19,620	231,481	24,361
10					
11 Total Revenue		2,641,242	2,319,698	2,567,262	2,650,762
12					
13					
14 EXPENSES					
15 Salaries, wages & benefits		1,066,595	1,120,673	1,029,642	1,093,110
16 Transportation, travel, meals, etc.		481,034	213,074	57,525	104,823
17 Professional Fees/Outside Services		252,670	132,342	94,324	106,276
18 Scholarships, grants, other assistance		136,165	64,896	80,452	125,196
19 Equip, supplies, other religious mtl.		144,828	53,697	23,308	26,086
20 Repairs and maintenance		41,644	41,048	36,159	35,195
21 Utilities		27,423	25,728	19,082	22,859
22 Telephone		21,526	25,900	26,898	21,944
23 Advertising		375	-	-	-
24 Insurance		43,495	43,436	49,095	34,378
25 Printing, postage, & delivery		22,145	17,873	20,227	9,957
26 Dues, fees, & subscriptions		30,434	30,182	22,745	26,971
27 Conferences & meetings		22,626	9,004	7,390	4,065
28 Bank charges		5,768	2,409	2,184	3,499
29 Depreciation		19,931	29,077	26,894	28,463
30 Facility payment in lieu of taxes		40,102	40,103	36,299	36,364
31 Miscellaneous				3,375	2,912
32 Interest Expense				1,239	-
33 Payroll processing fees		3,462	2,886	6,401	3,303
34 Total Functional Expenses		2,360,223	1,852,328	1,543,239	1,685,401
35					
36 Chg in actuarial val of annuities/unitrust		5,010	2,952	6,000	2,032
37 Investment income, net		(1,635)	6,415	2,617	
38 Non Operating Activity		3,375	9,367	8,617	2,032
39					
40 CHANGE IN NET ASSETS		284,394	476,737	1,032,640	967,393
41					
42 <i>Change in Net Assets with Donor Restriction</i>		<i>188,670</i>	<i>402,771</i>	<i>313,079</i>	
43 <i>Change in Net Assets without Donor Restriction</i>		<i>95,724</i>	<i>73,966</i>	<i>719,561</i>	
44 Change in Net Assets		284,394	476,737	1,032,640	

Departments

Report to the 20th All-American Council Departments of the Orthodox Church in America

It is a great honor to present this report to the All-American Council in the new role of “Project Manager of the Departments.” To give context to our current configuration, we must tell at least a brief story of the Departments’ past and present and then speak of the future, to understand how we got to where we are today and to chart where we are going. I am absolutely convinced of the fruitful future of the Departments, as we begin to plant the seeds of a new direction for these important organs of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA).

The Past

What we know today as the current configuration of the Departments of the OCA, have had various names, structures, personnel, focus, and funding, over the past five decades.

When the OCA received her autocephaly in 1970, Orthodox resources in the English language were rare. The burgeoning OCA took her mission to be the Church in North America with great resolve, supporting parish ministries and Orthodox Christians with the development of much-needed resources which did not previously exist. The first half of the history of the OCA was met with an explosion of new and fresh materials. Towering leaders set their sights on equipping the parishes and the Church at large with exemplary offerings which endure even to this day. Especially in the era between the 1970s to 1990s, the enthusiasm of a young, vibrant, newly-minted autocephalous Church was clearly evident in the voluminous production of practical materials and resources that had never been produced before. Gifted individuals, inspired by the direction and leadership of the OCA, saw the need for resources in the areas of Christian education, music, parish ministry, and outreach materials. They created resources, provided workshops, clarified the vision, and inspired a direction for the Church at large.

Over the decades, the Departments have gone through various changes in names, structures, personnel, and projects. It must be noted and emphasized that all of the individuals that have served in the Departments have done so out of tremendous love for Christ and the Church in the hope that the faithful would be well served by their efforts. As time went on and as leadership changed both in the Departments (or Ministry Units, as they were called, at times) the vision and productivity of the individual Departments sometimes responded to the new challenges of the Church in very energetic ways, but it also must be admitted that others sometimes lost focus, impetus, and productivity.

As we look to the future, we must first look back in deep gratitude to all those who have selflessly served the Church in this way. We thank God for their productivity and vision which provides great inspiration

for the work ahead of us. The “why” of this reality is not as important as the question of “what do we do about it now?”

The Present

In the Summer of 2019, I proposed to Fr Alexander Rentel a new vision and practical strategy for revitalizing the work and productivity of the Departments of the OCA. In the Fall of 2019, I had the honor of meeting with His Beatitude to present a model for a way forward for the Departments, based on the inspiring vision outlined in His Beatitude’s “Four Pillars” document, as well as a guiding hand provided by an overseeing Manager for the Departments. In March 2020, Fr Alexander extended His Beatitude’s blessing to begin this work.

The Departments were given a very modest budget of \$10,000 for the remainder of the year, (excluding the Department of Liturgical Music and Translations and money that remains from the Youth Initiative), we are now embracing a new direction in the Departments, which I will explain.

My first task was to assess the current state of the Departments by having conversations with all of the “current” personnel of each Department. I say “current” because there was a certain amount of ambiguity regarding the status of most of the Departments since the stipend for Department Chairpersons was eliminated in early 2019. Therefore, when I had these conversations, there was a certain amount of confusion, frustration, and sometimes disappointment - all of it understandable - about the status of the Departments and their own status as members. Some of those who were serving had been serving for years, if not decades, and bemoaned the lack of recognition for past work and the elimination of financial support which, to some, indicated a lack of value for the important work that could be accomplished. Many of the conversations were difficult and painful, but always in a tone of great empathy and hope for the future.

After these conversations, emails were sent to the existing members of Departments (except for Evangelization, as the prior Chair, Fr John Parker, focuses his energies entirely on St Tikhon’s Seminary) to ask for project proposals that could be accomplished by the end of the year. These projects would be short term goals that must adhere to two essential standards: 1) They must be directly related to the vision outlined by His Beatitude in the “Four Pillars” document, and 2) they must provide resources or services that directly benefit parishes and institutions of the OCA. Additionally, I reached out to priests in the OCA for any projects they might propose, especially in the areas of Evangelization. Project proposals would also have proposed expenses, including modest stipends. The proposals would then be reviewed by Fr Alexander Rentel and myself and either fully approved or sent back for modification. Those initial proposals were submitted, reviewed, modified, and approved.

It must be noted here that one of the great challenges to the work of the Departments in their current configuration is the abundance of materials being created by official Orthodox channels, various jurisdictions, as well as numerous parishes and individuals who have taken it upon themselves to produce resources, usually out of necessity. For instance, today there are dozens of Orthodox publishers

providing thousands of books on every conceivable topic, Orthodox media outlets providing audio and video resources, Church musicians providing thoughtfully crafted music, and various jurisdictions, Church organizations, and even individuals continuing to provide Christian education materials. Therefore, the Departments must approach their work in the light of the realities of 2022 and beyond. These

As we continue to develop new ways of doing departmental work, our sole focus will be to provide essential resources and services which support the ministries of parishes and missions. These resources should also seek to fulfill the vision of His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon as outlined in the document “Of What Life Do We Speak? Four Pillars for the Fulfillment of the Apostolic Work of the Church” along with the guidance and blessing of the Holy Synod.

One change that has been made in light of the current direction, which may or may not be temporary, is that there will no longer be Department Chairs as we have come to understand that position in the past. Instead, I will serve as the chairperson for all Departments and each project will have a Project Lead who will serve through the term of the project until completion. Departments may also have other Consultants listed simply for their expertise and/or past involvement. This approach, I believe, encourages a sense of forward momentum that reaches the goals of developing healthy departments and valuable productivity for the sake of our parishes and faithful.

The current operating model of the Departments is that the Project Manager seeks out Project Leads to spearhead proposed projects to completion. The Project Manager reports directly to the Chancellor to enact the vision of the Metropolitan and Holy Synod for the benefit of parishes, missions, and institutions. Consultants may also be adjuncts to a particular department without reference to a current project.

The **Project Manager** has the following responsibilities:

- manages the activities of the departments
- conceives the goals of projects, resources and activities which support parishes, missions, and institutions
- works within the constraint of budgets while assisting in fundraising for future growth
- seeks out qualified Project Leads who complete assigned projects
- ensures that agreed-upon stipends are submitted for payment
- reports on the progress of the departments to the Chancellor

The **Project Lead** has the following responsibilities:

- works with the Project manager to agree upon the production of specific projects, resources and/or activities
- completes projects within established timelines
- seeks out assistance from others when agreed upon by the Project Manager

- works within the policies of the Orthodox Church in America
- communicates with the Project Manager regarding progress of projects, resolving roadblocks, and executing completed assignments

Consultants have the following responsibilities:

- recognized as experts in a particular departmental field
- may advise the Project Manager or Project Leads
- may or may not be actively working on projects

Production and Plans by Department

Department of Liturgical Music and Translations

Phillip Ritchey, Project Lead

Vladimir Morosan, Project Lead

Dn Anthony Stokes, Project Lead

Fr Gregory Ealy, Project Lead

- **ONGOING:** Compilation of all available resources and texts that have been used in the past and present under the “Texts for Liturgical Services” section provided in the helpful, but labor-intensive, individual service sheets published on the OCA website. He will be compiling all current texts into a usable online Horologion, Triodion, Pentecostarion, Menaion, Psalter, and other possible resources that we currently possess.
- **ONGOING:** Expansion of Thee/Thou music for the Ochtoechos and Menaion
- **ONGOING:** Creation of complete rubrical notes for upcoming Divine Services. The current focus is on the Saturday night/Sunday cycle, but plans include expanding to include other commonly served services for the Great and Vigil-ranked feasts.
- **ONGOING:** Posting of basic music for Matins and Vespers.
- **ONGOING:** Basic Sight-Singing and Ear-Training Course for choir directors and singers who may be unfamiliar with basic musical concepts. (*This is the third round for this popular program.*)
- **ONGOING:** Basic Conducting Course held online.
- **COMPLETE:** Free webinars to prepare church musicians for the Vespers and Matins services. Webinars will be archived on YouTube.
- **PENDING:** An interactive course on Music Editing using Finale according to OCA standards. This will enable us to have other talented music editors who could contribute to the volumes of music that are needed to supply parish choirs.
- **COMPLETE:** Productive meetings have been held with St Vladimir’s Seminary and St Tikhon’s Seminary regarding areas of cooperation and concern.

Department of Evangelization

Fr Thomas Soroka, Project Lead

Melissa Graff, Project Lead

- **ONGOING:** Launch, review, and award of 2021 and 2022 Mission Planting Grant Program. Ongoing maintenance of program and coaching of mission parishes and priests. Plans are currently underway for 2023.
- **COMPLETE:** Revision and redesigning of the late Fr John Matusiak's "Tract series" which was sold through OCPC and later acquired by St Vladimir's Seminary Bookstore. Approximately 50 attractive trifold and bifold tracts, professionally designed, made freely available for download and use in parishes.
- **PENDING:** Online live seminars on apologetics.
- **PENDING:** A compilation of currently available educational and liturgical resources in the Spanish language and the creation of new resources as needed.
- **PENDING:** Production of a series of new videos on various topics important to Orthodox Christians. They will have higher production values and will be branded as products of the OCA.
- **PENDING:** A new apologetics website that will feature articles mainly by OCA priests and informed OCA laypersons. The purpose of this site is to provide reliable, well-researched materials on a variety of subjects that are currently being addressed online, sometimes by unreliable or questionable persons or sources. This site would be in answer to the growing number of independent voices on the internet which are causing confusion and even rebellion among some.

Department of Continuing Education

Fr Ian Pac-Urar, Project Lead/Chairperson

- **COMPLETE:** Production of 12 one-hour online seminars or educational forums in 2021 on a variety of topics relevant to clergy and church workers.
- **ONGOING:** Production of monthly one-hour online seminars or educational forums on a variety of topics relevant to clergy and church workers.

Department of Christian Service and Humanitarian Aid

Donna Karabin and Diana Pasca, Project Leads

- COMPLETED: Production of links and tags to all current resources in the Department supporting His Beatitude's "Four Pillars" document.
- ONGOING: Additional articles for Parish Ministry Resources.
- PENDING: Four live approximately one-hour long webinars on the topics based on "Compassion in Action" with guest speakers to address relevant topics.

Department of Youth, Young Adult, and Campus Ministry

Fr David Subu, Project Lead

Fr Ronald Tucci, Project Lead

- COMPLETE: Coordination of the annual Orthodox Youth Workers Conference, held January 27-29, 2021 online.
- COMPLETE: Coordination of the annual Orthodox Youth Workers Conference, held yearly at the end of January, which is planned for early February 2022 at Antiochian Villiage.
- COMPLETE: Coordination of the OCA's participation in the Assembly of Bishops "Year of Youth" initiative. Fr David will be the project coordinator for a series of webinars.
- PENDING: Resource creation for use in parishes to engage youth at various levels.
- COMPLETE: Coordination and management of all youth activities of the 2022 All-American Council
- PENDING: Bible Bowl-type competition.

Department of Christian Education

Fr Thomas Soroka, Project Lead

Frs Alexander Koranda and Jonathan Lincoln; and Catherine Golitzin, Project Leads

Valerie Zahirsky, Project Lead

Eileen Mountain and Kathy Boraas, Project Leads

Kelly Potteiger, Project Leads

- ONGOING: Coordination of efforts with the GOA and Antiochian Christian Education leads. (*Fr Thomas Soroka is currently meeting with this group.*)
- COMPLETE: Online Church School for Middle School and High School Students provided openly for any students who wish to join during the height of the pandemic.
- ONGOING: Submission of various articles supporting Christian Education in homes and parishes.
- PENDING: Completion of a sixth volume of Saints activity book for children as an online resource.

- COMPLETE: Development of new six-lesson FOCUS units on the post-Resurrection/Acts of the Apostles work of the church.
- COMPLETE: Development of new Vacation Church School units that can also be used as stand-alone lessons.

Inter-Departmental

- IN PRODUCTION: A 16-chapter/session Catechism written collaboratively by outstanding authors and made freely available for parish use, including a catechist and catechumen manual, and a resource site to accompany the course.

We are excited about the plans and possibilities for the coming months and years ahead. We need your help. First, pray that God would bless the work of the Departments to strengthen and increase it. Next, support the ongoing efforts by considering a gift to the Stewards of the OCA which is the main source of funds for Departmental work. Finally, if you have an idea, see a need, or want to offer your talents as a Project Lead or contributor, contact me at tsoroka@oca.org.

Archpriest Thomas Soroka
Project Manager

Board of Theological Education

BOARD OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Mandate

Under the direction of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, the Board of Theological Education establishes, maintains, and oversees the general standards and curriculum for the education and formation of clergy in the Orthodox Church in America's three seminaries. The Board also oversees the general standards and curriculum for the Church's Late Vocations Programs, evaluates those who complete such programs, and offers recommendations to the Holy Synod of Bishops on the ordination of individuals completing such programs.

The Diaconal Vocations Program (DVP) is a program of theological study providing academic preparation for men who may be called to ordination to the Holy Diaconate but who are unable to attend a seminary. It is also designed to address specific academic and pastoral issues of non-Orthodox clergy — who may have already earned a theological degree such as a M.Div. — who are seeking entry into the Orthodox Church and may eventually be called to Holy Orders.

The members of the Board of Theological Education are always mindful that the Board's oversight of theological education and the ordination process, so to speak, is in service of the salvific mission of the Church in the world. The Board is continually examining how best to serve the authentic needs of the Church while upholding the high standards of the Orthodox Church in America.

Membership

Metropolitan Tikhon, Chairperson; Archbishop Michael, Diocese of New York and New Jersey; Archbishop Irénée, Archdiocese of Canada; Archpriest Alexander Rentel, Chancellor; Archpriest Kirill Sokolov, Director of Diaconal and Late Vocations Programs, Secretary of the Board of Theological Education; Archpriest Vasily Fisher, Dean, St. Herman's Seminary; Archpriest John Parker, Dean, St. Tikhon's Seminary; Archpriest Chad Hatfield, President, St. Vladimir's Seminary

Full contact information for the Board and the DVP can be found at <http://www.oca.org/dvp>.

Initiatives and Ongoing Projects since the 18th AAC

Archpriest Kirill Sokolov (appointed 2010) continues to serve as Director of Diaconal and Late Vocations and as a resource to the Board of Theological Education. In Summer 2021, Priest Lawrence Soper was appointed to manage the day-to-day correspondence of the DVP (through Summer 2022).

At any given moment, there are approximately thirty candidates actively engaged in study in the Diaconal Vocations Program. Additionally, 5-10 students are enrolled in diaconal formation programs of dioceses at any given time. The Board works to coordinate the efforts of local diaconal training

programs and to facilitate clear communication between bishops, candidates, parish clergy, program directors, and the Holy Synod.

Since 2007, Diaconal Liturgical Practicums have been a required component of the DVP. Shorter programs are held in various dioceses as requested. A longer annual practicum is organized by the DVP; the 2019 and 2021 sessions were held at St. Seraphim Cathedral, Santa Rosa, CA (the 2020 session was cancelled due to the pandemic). The 2022 session is being held at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary. The Practicums have been a regular feature of church life that bring candidates and deacons from all over North America and reliably "sell out."

Since the last All-American Council, the online platform for accessing course materials has been rebuilt and reorganized. Small curricular revisions have been made especially as new resources become available from Orthodox publishers.

Increased comfort with and availability of online collaboration tools has strengthened the application and vetting process for candidates to the DVP and diocesan programs. In particular, the process for obtaining the hierarch's blessing in the Diocese of the South has set a new standard for an elegant and thorough process.

A review of the psychological background check process was begun under the chairmanship of Archbishop Paul of blessed memory.

The Board of Theological Education continues to support His Beatitude and the Holy Synod of Bishops in reviewing procedures and practices related to training and ordination of clergy. Reflection and oversight around issues facing our seminaries and theological education is an ongoing task of the Board. In particular, calls for pathways to priestly ordination other than the traditional residential seminary program are a frequent matter of debate. Requests for exceptions to the norms from diocesan bishops have become more common since the last AAC while, at the same time, hybrid and online education has grown in general societal acceptance. The Board is studying these questions and the needs of the Church in a rigorous and faithful way that is mindful of the benefits of a sustained residential program of priestly formation.

In 2017, at His Beatitude's initiative, the Board began to work towards more regular academic exchange programs with the Church of Russia. In 2019, a second exchange from the Orthodox Church in America to the Church of Russia took place. Plans for further exchanges were effectively interrupted in 2020 by the pandemic. The Board is looking to work closely with our seminaries to extend such opportunities with the Local Orthodox Churches.

Conclusion

The members of the Board of Theological Education are grateful to God for the candidates who invest their time and energy into applying themselves to the Diaconal Vocations Program and other programs of formation of our Church. It is inspiring to work with the men seeking to become "vessels of grace" in this particular vocation. We are humbled by the support they receive from their wives, families, priest-

mentors, and parish communities.

Respectfully submitted,

Archpriest Kirill Sokolov, Ed.D.

Director of Diaconal and Late Vocations

Secretary of the Board of Theological Education

Institutional Chaplains

Institutional Chaplains

Mandate:

The Office of Institutional Chaplaincy supports the ministry of full and part-time hospital, hospice, long-term care, prison, fire, police chaplains, and those in other settings.

The Orthodox Church in America is a member of the Commission for Ministry in Specialized Settings (**COMISS Network**) and endorses chaplains to serve in specific institutional settings and toward certification with the Association of Professional Chaplains (**APC**), the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (**ACPE**), and the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy (**CPSP**). The OCA is also a member of the Association of Religious Endorsing Bodies (**AREB**), and Fr. Steven is a past-chair of this endorsing community.

His Beatitude, Metropolitan TIKHON is the Orthodox Ecclesiastical Endorser for OCA clergy and laypersons who are clinically trained and serving as institutional chaplains; this office initiates recommendations for endorsement. Archpriest Steven Voytovich serves as the Office's Director, supporting the formal endorsement process for institutional chaplains and facilitating dialogue among those ministering in a variety of institutional settings.

Institutional Chaplaincy endorsement has formally functioned since 2003, and was identified as an office in 2006, to formally endorse those engaged in ministry in specialized settings such as hospitals, hospices, long-term care, correctional, emergency response, and other settings. This office remains within budgeted funding parameters.

Clergy and qualified laypersons need this formal endorsement to accept employment positions, and to be certified as chaplains. Like military chaplains, institutional chaplains receive their endorsement from the Office of the Metropolitan. As we are a formal endorser, this Office Chair represents our Orthodox Church in America in an endorsing capacity, as well as attending credentialing body meetings. At the writing of this report, new developments have unfolded as related to institutional chaplaincy under the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops (ACOB), highlighted below.

Membership: (Members here are all those who are currently endorsed and certified chaplains.)

Fr. Steven Voytovich, Chair; Fr. Paul Fetsko; Fr. Michael Medis; Fr. Joseph McCartney; Chaplains: Subdeacon Abraham Labrada Santiago; Jessica D'Angio; Larisa Waya; Anna Nikitina; Brett McKey; Beryl Knudsen was in the process of seeking certification, suffering a death in her family.

Resources: Fr. James Parnell (VA Chaplaincy) Website: www.orthinc.org

Reflection on the Theme “Becoming Vessels of Grace”

St. Paul in having been blinded is identified by God to Ananias in Acts 9: “he is a chosen *vessel* of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.” Institutional chaplains are similarly sent, as God’s vessels, to minister to a broad spectrum of persons who are suffering or struggling. Often the very effort of ministering to them includes a struggle on the chaplain’s part in the sense of having integrity in ministering as Orthodox Christians, and yet seeking to be prayerfully present, through God’s grace, with persons of diverse faiths, or no espoused faith. We would affirm God’s presence in each of these encounters, whether or not made explicit or manifest in those moments. St. Paul sought at once to be a light to Jews and Gentiles: the former in terms of fulfillment of God’s covenant with His people, and the latter to introduce Our Lord Jesus Christ, crucified and risen from the dead, engendering faith among those not knowing Him. Later in St. Paul’s second Letter to the Corinthians (4:6-7) he states: “For it the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen *vessels*, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.” He continues to speak here about being hard-pressed, persecuted, struck down, but not crushed, forsaken, or destroyed. These are encouraging words for us all to hear.

As you read this brief reflection, I would ask your prayers for all our institutional chaplains who have, as “*vessels of grace*”, lived and ministered through a time of great turmoil in our Covid 19 pandemic, among other challenges across our country in caring for patients and residents. They will be supported in continuing in this ministry through your prayers as faithful, clergy, monastics, and hierarchs, each having journeyed through this time of turmoil with your own struggles and challenges. May we all be comforted by these words of the prophecy of Isaiah, quoted in the Acts of the Apostles: “In an acceptable time I have heard you, And in the day of salvation I have helped you. (Is. 49:8) “Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” (Acts 6:2) God’s strength continues to work in the midst of our human frailty.

Initiatives and Projects Since the 19th All American Council

1. Fr. Steven continues to represent the OCA before the Commission on Ministry in Specialized Settings (COMISS Network) and the Association of Religious Endorsing Bodies (AREB). He will become the Chair of COMISS in 2023.
2. As of October 2022, Institutional Chaplaincy has been developed under ACOB. This model, initially framed by Fr. Steven, was further developed by a multi-jurisdictional work group, and utilizes a multi-jurisdictional appointment council to ensure fair and open access for endorsement. The OCA Holy Synod has decided to maintain our current endorsement office at this time, and at the request of Archpriest Alexander Rentel, our OCA Chancellor, a Memorandum of Understanding has been created to differentiate Fr. Steven’s participation as Director of this office, and now Endorser under ACOB.

3. In October 2022, Fr. Steven participated in an international conference hosted by the Russian Orthodox Church related to chaplaincy during the Covid pandemic.

Plans, Initiatives and Projects for the Future

1. To continue building our endorsement practices in conjunction with best practice models and in keeping with our unique Orthodox ecclesiastical frame. To begin framing out a handbook related to the functioning of institutional chaplains. It has been challenging to begin this work during the pandemic these past years.
2. Prepare and develop new leadership to continue advancing the work of the department.
3. This Office will continue to support our institutional chaplains, and remain ready to collaborate in advancing institutional chaplaincy in the greater Orthodox Church, and in the greater pastoral care and counseling context.

Conclusion

One of the present challenges before this office is made real by the advent of credentialing bodies that do not conform to existing standards of theological education, or relationships with faith traditions. This means that persons can now be credentialed who may have one or even neither of the above. This means that we as the Orthodox Church in America will now need to take a more active role in articulating what have been standards for credentialing to our candidates for credentialing: an M.Div. degree or equivalent, endorsement through this office, and four units of recognized clinical training. The best way for us to proceed is to in fact develop a handbook for our institutional chaplains, and to hold our endorsed institutional chaplains to these standards.

One final comment: In 2023 this office will celebrate 20 years of formal institutional chaplaincy endorsement. In 2025 the Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) movement itself will celebrate 100 years! This is a milestone to note in our American context, and all of our endorsed Orthodox Christian chaplains have benefitted from this training and pastoral formation, as well as those pursuing theological education.

Office of Military Chaplains

Office of Orthodox Church in America Military and Veterans Affairs Medical Center Chaplaincies
20th AAC Report July 2022, Baltimore, Maryland

Office of the Military and VAMC Chaplaincies of the Orthodox Church in America.

Very Rev. Theodore Boback, Jr. –
Dean/Executive Director OCA Military and VA Chaplaincy
Very Reverend Joseph J. Gallick -
Assistant Dean/Deputy Director OCA Military and VA Chaplaincy

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, serves as Ecclesiastical Endorser for the US Military and Veterans Affairs Medical Center Chaplains;

His Grace, Bishop Daniel serves as the OCA Episcopal Liaison,

General

The Office of the OCA Military and VA Chaplaincies oversees the requirements of the Military and VA Chaplaincies in regards to the Armed Forces Chaplains Board, the branch Chiefs of Chaplains and the VAMC National Chaplain and staff. The Office actively participates in the various annual meetings of the National Conference of Ministry to the Armed Forces, the Endorsers Conference of Veterans Affairs Chaplaincy, and the Armed Forces Chaplains Board meeting with the Chiefs of Chaplains. The Office provides support to the active duty, reserve component and national guard chaplains and the part time, full time, fee based VAMC Chaplains. The office reviews the requests for ecclesiastical endorsement, discusses with the appropriate Diocesan Hierarch and discusses the final recommendation with Metropolitan Tikhon who is the endorser for the Orthodox Church in America.

Vision

The Orthodox Military Chaplain is an Orthodox Priest in uniform who serve in the Armed Forces of the United States of America. The Veterans Affairs Medical Center Chaplain is an Orthodox Priest who serves in the Department of Veterans Affairs in a medical center. They are active members of the respective chaplaincy and share a common core of professional responsibilities for worship services, pastoral and personal counseling, administrative duties, pastoral visitations, cultural activities, humanitarian projects, moral leadership, and appropriate collateral duty assignments.

They in addition to fulfilling the disciplines, dogmas, doctrines of faith and other canonical directives required of all Orthodox Priests, comply with the administrative requirements of their Ecclesiastical Endorsing Agency.

They exercise their priestly mission in three ways: to those of the Orthodox Faith, to those of other faiths, and to those who have no religious affiliation.

Mission

The mission of the OCA's military chaplain is the propagation of the Orthodox Faith; to serve, worship, and love our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; and to bring spiritual nourishment and enlightenment to thousands of Orthodox military personnel and their families serving their country throughout the world.

The mission of the Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) Chaplain is to counsel and to bring spiritual nourishment through the Holy Sacraments to hundreds of Orthodox veterans in VA Medical Centers throughout the United States of America.

Operation

The Orthodox Church in America endorses Orthodox Priests for the Military and VAMC Chaplaincy. The Office of Military and VAMC Chaplaincies currently operates directly under the supervision of the Metropolitan and forms a unique deanery of the Church. According to the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America (Article XI section 4 a. and 4b.), the Dean of Orthodox Military and Veterans Administration Chaplains is appointed by and directly responsible to the Metropolitan.

The Executive Director and Dean of Chaplains is the chief administrator for the Metropolitan in all matters concerning the OCA chaplains in the Air Force, Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard and the Veterans Administration. The Executive Director/Dean is the representative of the Metropolitan to the National Conference of Ministry to the Armed Forces (NCMAF) and the Endorsers Conference for Veterans Affairs Chaplaincy (ECVAC). The Assistant Executive Director works together with the Executive Director.

The Executive Director/Dean and the Assistant Executive Director recruit and screen candidates for the chaplaincy, prepare ecclesiastical endorsement for the Metropolitan and maintain contact with all Orthodox chaplains and with the Executive Director of the Armed Services Chaplains Board, Military Chief of Chaplains and the VA National Staff Chaplain and chaplain staff. They do this through telecommunications, email, correspondence, and by participating in various meetings and site visitations throughout the world. The Executive Director/Dean provides guidance to chaplains serving throughout the world on spiritual matters and ensures that Orthodox personnel, regardless of where they are stationed can freely exercise their religious beliefs. The Executive Director/Dean attends all conferences and executive board committee meetings of the NCMAF and ECVAC.

The Military chaplains from the Orthodox Church in America serve in the United States Armed Forces in the United States, Germany, Korea, Japan, and the Middle East. The Veterans Affairs Medical Center Chaplains serve within the United States at VAMC Hospitals.

Reflection:

The Orthodox Military Chaplain perform a full cycle of liturgical services including Vespers, Matins, Divine Liturgy, Feast Days, and services during Advent, Great Lent, the Dormition and Apostles Fasts, Liturgy of Pre-Sanctified Gifts and administering the Sacraments of the Church. Our Orthodox Priests have been deployed in support of the Global War on Terror. Our priests provided worship Services during holy Week and Pascha in tandem with other Orthodox Chaplains from other branches of the services. Other Orthodox Military Chaplains have served with coalition forces for example from Estonia, Georgia, and Romania while others have mentored and have served with the first Orthodox Chaplain in the Canadian Forces since WWI. Others have advised on various issues and concerns such as those who served with the Coast Guard in Alaska where they advised on coastal Alaskan communities which are indigenously Orthodox.

Included among the continued Ministry Concern of our chaplain are:

Spiritual Renewal, Ministry of Present, Moral Injury, Readiness, Interfaith and Ecumenical Ministries Programs, outreach programs, service on various boards such as family action; biomedical ethics, advisory councils.

“For no greater love is there – than to give one’s life for a friend.” (John 13:15). As the Orthodox Military and VAMC Chaplain journeys in his ministry, he shares unconditionally in the life of the servicemember/veteran. His faith, trust, and hope operate through love. He has love of God and those to whom he ministers. Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ is the example for the Chaplain in serving. The chaplain is dedicated and is an example of love to others and he has respect and care for all entrusted to him. The chaplain brings God to the “servicemember and the servicemember to God” and they “nurture the living, care for the wounded and honor the fallen.” – for the life of the world.

Among Initiatives and projects since the 19th AAC are:

- The Office successfully recruited chaplains for service in the US Armed Forces and the Veterans Affairs Medical Centers.
- Bishop Daniel made Archpastoral visit to Military Installations and Bases.
- The office, provided updates to Metropolitan Tikhon and Bishop Daniel, as the OCA Hierarchy member representatives on the committee for military and VA chaplaincy of the Assembly of Canonical Bishops of North America.

- The office, in January of each year, participates in the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces (NCMAF), the Endorsers Conference for Veterans Affairs Chaplaincy (ECVAC) and the Armed Forces Chaplains Board (AFCB) with the Chiefs of Chaplains from each branch of service.
- Completion of protocols and of the re issuance of the OCA Military Chaplain Cross.
- The office provided updates to Metropolitan Tikhon and Bishop Daniel.
- Virtual meetings with Metropolitan Tikhon, Bishop Daniel, and military chaplains, Newsletter with military and VAMC Chaplains articles, pictures. Information. Thanks to Fr. Sean and Matushka Jennifer Levine for editing and publishing it.
- The office submits a written report to the Holy Synod of Bishops and Metropolitan Council as required.
- Prepared ecclesiastical forms for submission by the Metropolitan to the various agencies.
- Fr. Theodore Boback completed his term of office on the executive board of the NCMAF this past year. He has also served on the ECVAC Committee. Met with some of the members of COMISS while attending the NCMAF/ECVAC Conferences in Washington, DC
- Received invitation and participated in the annual Memorial Day Service for deceased veterans at Saint Tikhon Monastery prior to the Pandemic.
- Continued work on the Memorial Shrine for Veterans and Chaplaincy.
- Worked (partnered) with the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America (FOCA) in supporting the military chaplaincy program through providing various religious materials to the Orthodox Military Chaplains. Also worked with Churches which wanted to do an outreach program.
- Worked with Churches which wanted to do an outreach program.
- Communications with chaplain candidate, chaplains (Armed Forces and VAMC)
- Provide required annual report to the Armed Forces Chaplains Board
- Communications with the recruiters from the various branches of service. The recruiters will be present in the exhibit hall with information on the military chaplaincy.
- Communication with the VAMC Chief of Chaplain Office and Personnel Office.

In particular,

Endorser's Conferences:

The annual National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces (NCMAF), the Endorsers Conference for Veterans Affairs Chaplaincy (ECVAC) and the Armed Forces Chaplains Board with the three branches Chief of Chaplains is conducted annually in the month of January. The OCA Office of Military and VAMC Chaplaincy is also a member of the Commission on Ministry in Specialized Settings (COMISS) which is in session prior to the NCMAF and ECVAC Meetings. Both the Military and Institutional Chaplaincy have a delegate representative for the COMISS, Very Reverend Steven Voytovich, Director of the OCA Institutional Chaplaincy Office attends the COMISS meetings.

Some highlights of the past conference were presentations: National Veterans Affairs Chaplain presentation; Ministry in challenging times; The challenge of pluralism; P.A.C.T. Professionalism, Advocacy, Community, and Training;

Military Chaplains Association: The Military Chaplaincy Association (MCA) Conference is held on an annual basis and the next conference will be held in Louisville, Kentucky in August 2022, This year, it will be held in conjunction with the Chaplain Civil Air Patrol Conference.

Military Chaplain Cross: The Military Chaplain Cross protocols have been written. Thanks to those who were an instrumental part of the process of the re issuance of the Cross being awarded to the OCA Military Chaplains. Thanks to Bishop Daniel, Episcopal Liaison to the Office and Fr. Alexander Rentel for their assistance and continued support of the project.

Chaplaincy Kits: Since providing Liturgical items to the first United States Armed Forces Orthodox Military Chaplain (Fr. Vladimir Borichevsky), the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America (FOCA) has supported the Chaplaincy in various ways. The FOCA had a "Gifts of Love" Project for collecting monies for the buying of religious materials and articles to give to our chaplains for service members and veterans. The FOCA had also conducted such projects several years ago. Remaining packets with other religious materials were distributed to the chaplains this past year.

MILITARY AND VA CHAPLAIN PERSONNEL STRENGTH

Personnel Statistics have changed through the years and it continues to change based on requirements of the United States Armed Forces and the Veterans Affairs Medical Centers in fulfilling their respective missions.

Retirements:

Military: Fr. Stephen Duesenberry retired from the United States Navy. Fr. Stephen is now the rector of Holy Ghost Church, Bulgarian Diocese, Youngstown, Ohio.

Fr. Peter Dubinin retired from the United States Army. Fr. Peter is now the Priest in Charge of the Protection of the Holy Virgin Mary Mission, Clarksville, Tennessee.

Their dedication and devotion to pastoral ministry to the service members and families was outstanding and resulted in the spiritual nourishment and enrichment for those served. May God grant His Choicest Blessings to Fr. Stephen and family and to Fr. Peter and family. Many Years!

Veterans Affairs Medical Center: Fr. Daniel Degyansky, NY, Fr. Paul Suda, Pittsburgh VAMC, and Fr. Philip Reese, FL Their ministry resulted in spiritual nourishment and enrichment to the veterans, staff and families. May God grant His many Blessings to each of them and families – Many Years!

Memory Eternal:

To our Hierarchs who served in various capacities of the OCA Military and VAMC Chaplaincies; to the OCA Military and VAMC Chaplaincies and to the wives of OCA Military Chaplains:

Metropolitan Theodosius, who had served as the Endorser for the Orthodox Church in America when he was the Primate of the OCA. 19 October 2020 buried at Monastery of the Holy Transfiguration, Ellwood City, PA. Note: Metropolitan Theodosius served prior to his elevation to the Episcopacy as parish priest in Madison Illinois where he served as a contract priest in providing Worship Services to the military personnel at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.

Archbishop Nikon who had served as the liaison for the OCA with the Assembly of Canonical Bishops of America. 1 September 2019, buried in Michigan

Archpriest Daniel Ressetar, United States Air Force Reserve Retired 20 January 2021 buried at Saint Tikhon Monastery Cemetery, South Canaan, PA.

Archpriest John Tkachuk, United States Air Force Reserve, Retired 19 February 2021 buried at Saint Tikhon Monastery Cemetery, South Canaan, PA

Archpriest John Kondratich, United States Air Force, Retired, 31 March 2021 buried at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery, San Antonio, TX

Archpriest Walter Lecko followed Metropolitan Theodosius as the rector of Madison, IL where he also served as a contract priest in providing Worship Services to the military personnel at Fort Leonard Wood, MO. 16 March 2021 buried Saint Mary Cathedral Cemetery MN.

Archpriest Joseph Martin, Chief Chaplain Wilkes-Barre VAMC 9 November 2018 buried Saint Tikhon Monastery Cemetery South Canaan, PA

Also, we remember the Matushki:

Matushka Nina Stroyen, 23 April 2020, buried at Saint Tikhon Monastery Cemetery, South Canaan, PA - wife of the late Archpriest Basil Stroyen, Chaplain USAF

Matushka Virginia Katherine Pyrch, 5 August 2020, wife of Archpriest Paul Pyrch

May God grant them rest eternal in His Heavenly Kingdom, Memory Eternal! and grant His Grace, Comfort and Peace to the families.

Also, our office joins with others in offering prayers in remembrance of Archpriest John Matusiak who worked through the years with us in publishing our submitted articles about the military and VAMC chaplain's ministry to the servicemembers and veterans in The Orthodox Church newspaper and on the OCA web page. May God grant Fr John rest eternal in His Heavenly Kingdom.

Current Orthodox Church in America Military Personnel Strength.

Active Duty

Father Eugene Lahue Chaplain, Colonel, USAF, FL

Father Ovidiu Pacurar Chaplain, Captain, USAF, Lackland AFB, TX

Father Thaddeus Werner Chaplain Captain USAF Robins AFB, GA

Father Timothy Yates, Chaplain, USAF, Ramstein AFB, Germany

United States Army

Father. Matthew Fuhrman Chaplain (CPT) USA Fort Gordon, GA

Father George Hill, Chaplain (LTC), USA Schofield Barracks, HI

Father Sean Levine, Chaplain (MAJ), USA Fort Carson, CO

Father George Oanca, Chaplain (MAJ) Fort Carson, CO

United States Navy

Reserve Component

United States Air Force

Father Oliver Herbel Chaplain, NDANG

Father Gregory Bruner, Chaplain, Major, INANG

Father George Volkovinsky Chaplain, Captain, USAFR

United States Army

Father Danut Palanceau Chaplain (MAJ) USAR

Father James Parnell, Chaplain (MAJ) CTARNG

Father James Sizemore Chaplain (MAJ) OHARNG

United State Navy

Father Herman Kincaid, LCDR, CHC, USNR

Veterans Affairs Medical Center Chaplains

Father James Parnell, VAMC, New Haven, CT serves as the Chief of Chaplain Service at his respective VAMC. We are grateful to our retired VAMC Priests and to our current VAMC Chaplains for their continued ministry to our veterans ensuring the seamless transition from military to VA Healthcare System.

VA Chaplains might attend training that equips them to perform specific tasks and or to fill certain positions such as Post Traumatic Stress, moral injury, palliative care, substance abuse; etc.

Two OCA Priests serve our VAMCs

Father James Parnell – New Haven, CT - Full Time

Father George York, Pittsburgh, PA – Intermittent

Retired Military and VAMC Chaplains

There are over 30 retired Orthodox Military Priests from the United States Armed Forces with many of them serving within the OCA in various ministries. There are six OCA retired VAMC Chaplain. The retired chaplains have a range of special skills and are an additional asset within our Orthodox Church.

Many of our retired military and VAMC Priests upon retirement from the military continue to serve our Orthodox Church as parish priests or serve in missions; in support of the religious program in a civilian capacity; participate and serve in various leadership roles in military organizations; serve and volunteer in Orthodox Outreach; For example:

Archpriest Joseph Gallick served as a parish priest of Annunciation Orthodox Church, Natick, MA He is a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and he has served as the National VFW Chaplain.

Archpriest Peter Baktis serves as a parish priest in the Mother of God, Joy of All Who Sorrow Mission, Princeton, NJ He is also a member of Military Office Association of America, where he serves as president of the NJ Lakes and Pines Chapter and President of the Virtual chaplains chapter.

Archpriest Jerome Cwiklinski serves as a Civilian Volunteer Worship Provider with the United States Navy in providing Worship and other Sacraments of the Church to the various bases where he volunteers his ministry.

PLANS FOR FUTURE

- Continue to ensure that the Orthodox Tradition is upheld in a pluralistic environment.

- Participate on the committee for military chaplaincy of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North America through Bishop Daniel and Metropolitan Tikhon

- Continue to update Metropolitan Tikhon, Ecclesiastical Endorser; Bishop Daniel, OCA Episcopal liaison to the Office of the Military and VAMC Chaplaincies; the OCA Chancellor as needed and as required.

- Provide materials for parish clergy and faithful about the deployment cycles, the spiritual and emotional challenges, helping caring for the caregiver.

- Conduct an OCA Military Chaplain Conference and an OCA VAMC Chaplain Conference in 2020.

- Coordinate with Fr. Stephen Voytovich and conduct a second Joint Conference of OCA Military, OCA VAMC and OCA Institutional Chaplains.

- Develop a data base of training qualifications of the Orthodox Military and VAMC Chaplains and provide a link of this information to the various departments and offices as the need for certain skills and resources are identified and needed or required.

- Ensure that Orthodoxy is not dismissed as a religious body within the Department of Defense, Department of the VA, US Armed Force Chaplains Board as well as with the various support organizations; such as, NCMAF and ECVAC.

- Maintain our role and Orthodox Voice in NCMAF and ECVAC.

- Recruit Orthodox Priests for active, reserve component and national guard military chaplaincy and VA Chaplaincy.

- Update strategic plan for the OCA military and VA Chaplaincy.

- Continue to work on memorial shrine for veterans and chaplains.

- Diocesan recruitment plan for military chaplains.

- Visit seminaries and expand the chaplain candidate program.

- Continue to encourage chaplains to submit articles and photographs for the various , Diocesan newspapers, OCA web page; etc.

- Continued partnership with the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America (FOCA) and other such organizations.
- Continued partnership with churches who desire to do outreach programs for our chaplains, veterans, and service members.
- Ensure that the office of military and VA Chaplaincy budget is submitted annually and that an increase in budget for visitation of Orthodox Military and VAMC communities.

CONCLUSION:

The Office of Military and VA Chaplaincies continues to be an active member and participant in the National Conference of Ministry to the Armed Forces (NCMAF) and the Endorser Conference for Veterans Affairs Chaplaincy (ECVAC) and COMISS. The Orthodox Church in America is recognized by each of these organizations and the Military Chief of Chaplains and the VA National Chaplain Center as the endorser for OCA priests. For a priest to be considered for the military or veterans affairs medical center chaplaincy, a candidate must first have his Diocesan Bishop's Blessing, then an ecclesiastical endorsement from the Metropolitan, which is prepared by the Dean/Director, Office of the OCA Chaplaincies as well as the candidate must meet the requirements of the United States Armed Forces or the Veterans Affairs Medical Center National Chaplain Office. If you are interested in serving, please contact the OCA's Office of the Military and VAMC Chaplaincies.

Thanks to all who continue to support the Office of the Military and VAMC Chaplaincies, to Fr. Joseph Gallick, the Deputy Director, to our active duty, reserve component, national guard, VAMC and retired chaplains and various members of the office, to the Chancery Staff for their consultation on various concerns and various items. We express our gratitude to all who worked and consulted in various ways. Thanks to Metropolitan Tikhon for his archpastoral support and guidance. We especially express our gratitude to the Hierarchs of the OCA Holy Synod of Bishops who give their blessings in support of the priests to be endorsed by the Metropolitan to serve as chaplains in our US Armed Forces and the VAMC and for their prayers.

This year our OCA Chaplaincy celebrates the 79th anniversary of the first Orthodox Priest serving as a chaplain in the United States Armed Forces. Since the first Orthodox Priests to serve as a chaplain in North America, Protopresbyter John Osvanitsky with the Canadian Armed Forces during WWI, and the first US Armed Forces Orthodox Priests (in 1943, Archpriest Vladimir Borichevsky, Army; Archpriest Michael Kovach, Army; and Archpriest John Kivko, Army) and Fr. Alexander Seniavsky, who entered into the US Navy October 1944, Later, Fr. Basil Stroyen, Fr Nicholas Kiryluk and Fr Michael Margitich in the United States Air Force, through to our current chaplains who are listed in this report and who serve today, the mission of our chaplain continue. Whether in peace time or war time, during the WWII, Korea, Vietnam, "Cold War", Afghanistan, Iraq, Middle East, Bosnia, Balkans, or other conflicts

our priests volunteer to serve our Church our nation in a viable and dynamic ministry to the men and women in the United States Armed Force, authorized civilians, families and sometime coalition forces. Among the first VAMC Chaplains was Archpriest Eugene Pianovich, who was the first Orthodox Priest to serve in the VAMC in Wilkes-Barre, PA followed by the late Archpriest George Pawlush, then Fr. Joseph Martin together with our current VAMC chaplains who are listed in this report. Our priests in the VAMC Chaplaincy ensure the seamless transition of the requisite ministry from the military to the VA health care system. Remember our chaplains and families in your prayers.

Visit the US Army, US Navy and US Air Force Chaplain Booths to receive more information as well as our OCA military and VAMC booth.

Our office and the chaplains need to continue on the journey before us in the 21st century so that as we go forth with faith, hope, and love in all aspects of ministry and of our endeavors as Vessels of Grace, for the Glory of God and our Church.

Office of History and Archives

20TH ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL – 2022 OCA OFFICE OF HISTORY AND ARCHIVES REPORT

MANDATE: The Office of History and Archives promotes the ongoing development of the historical legacy and vision of the Orthodox Church in America as an essential element of the Church's Mission, and endeavors to assure proper preservation and accessibility of the historical record of Orthodox Christianity on the North American continent.

To fulfill this mandate, the Office collects and preserves the inactive records of the OCA Central Administration as well as other historically valuable collections that document the presence of Orthodox Christianity in North America since the arrival of the first missionaries in Alaska in 1794. The Office provides historical reference or documentation to OCA administrative bodies, local communities, seminarians and outside researchers. The Archivist lectures on historical topics both in the US and abroad. The Office assists dioceses, parishes and institutions in developing their own archival preservation efforts locally.

Since the 19th All-American Council (AAC) in July 2018, the following have been the major concerns and activities of the OCA Office of History and Archives:

In May 2018, just prior to the 19th All-American Council and too late to be included in a report at that time, the OCA Archivist participated as a speaker in the in the Fort Ross Dialogue Conference in Veliky Novgorod, Russia, and conducted research at the Russian State Historical Archives in Saint Petersburg (<https://www.oca.org/news/headline-news/oca-archivist-participates-in-recent-ft-ross-dialogue-conference>). The conference provided significant visibility for the Orthodox Church in America and its Archives, while archival research at the State Historical Archives served to continue development of the narrative of our Church's history.

Plans initiated in 2017 for renovation of Westwood's basement using proceeds of the McGuire Family Charitable Remainder Trust, were effectively shelved in 2019 by decision of the Metropolitan Council due to the broadening scope of the project by the architect and escalating cost estimates beyond available funding. At the same time, the Metropolitan Council began to explore possibilities for relocation of the Chancery and the OCA Archives, which ended any consideration of refurbishing the current facility.

In November 2018, the OCA Archives received a generous grant of \$49,000 for digitization from a private foundation that wishes to remain anonymous. The need to digitize our media collection of film, audio and video recordings due to their limited shelf life is imperative and it has been recognized for years, but funding had been lacking. Our preliminary grant request was for monies to cover equipment, supplies, a temporary assistant stipend and vendor services in order to digitize the aforementioned

media as well as some of our photo collection, in particular, fragile oversized images from seventy or more years ago.

As planning of the project was beginning, its direction and focus shifted when, a few months later, we received a donation of 25 boxes of video master tapes and recordings, as well as films from Deacon Gregory Uhrin, a professional videographer who has produced numerous projects for the Church since the 1980s. This collection is a veritable treasure trove of mostly unique material that has more than tripled the volume of our media holdings.

In summer 2019, the Archives was fortunate to have two interns assisting with the digitization project. One intern was funded by Adelphi University through a program that pairs students with not-for-profit organizations. His time was devoted in part to inventorying our media collections, particularly the items that were donated by Deacon Gregory Uhrin.

The second intern, Zach Mandell, a seminarian from St. Vladimir's Seminary, was funded by the digitization grant. He assisted with various logistical tasks, including researching equipment options for purchase in conjunction with digital storage and photo digitization. He also did a comparison of costs and services offered by the various vendors who do media digitization, and he drew up a prioritization list of items for digitization. Based on Zach's cost-benefit analysis, research was done to determine what should be digitized in-house and what needed to be outsourced. For the most part, media digitization, especially of films, reel-to-reel audio recordings, videos and other obsolete formats, requires expert technical skill and specialized equipment. After careful analysis of both cost and services, The MediaPreserve, a division of Preservation Technologies, a world-renowned digitization company located outside of Pittsburgh, was chosen to digitize our films and videos. Thus far, grant funds expended total \$6,921.62, of which \$3,857.22 was for equipment including a large high-definition scanner for photos and documents, a large computer monitor and 2 hard drives; \$2971.14 was for salary and payroll taxes for the seminarian intern; and \$93.20 for travel in conjunction with the project.

Full sorting and inventorying of media in preparation for transportation to The MediaPreserve was not yet completed when the Covid pandemic struck with its attendant closures followed by restrictions. More recently, with the firm decision to relocate the OCA Archives in the immediate future, packing the archives for the move has taken priority over all other tasks, including digitization. Therefore, the grant-funded digitization of OCA Archives media at The MediaPreserve will only now be taking place.

The OCA Archives was closed to researchers and other visitors in fall 2017 in anticipation of temporary offsite relocation of the archival holdings during projected renovation work. Soon after the renovation project was shelved, the coronavirus pandemic struck with its attendant protocols and, concurrently, plans got underway to sell the chancery property and to relocate the Archives. The Archives remains closed pending the relocation. As a result of these circumstances in recent years, it has been possible to accommodate few onsite researchers. However, historical inquiries from both the OCA administration as well as researchers within and outside the Church have been handled using email with scans of documents and photos, even during the pandemic.

As in previous years, the Archivist has continued to make presentations, when possible with pandemic restrictions, on OCA history for students at St. Tikhon's and St. Vladimir's Seminaries. One of the class presentations for St. Tikhon's Seminary during the pandemic was conducted remotely.

The OCA Archivist was a featured speaker in the St. Tikhon's Seminary 2019 Fall Lecture Series (https://www.stots.edu/news_190923_1) presenting a talk titled "Autocephaly: Documents and Reflections" (https://stots.edu/news_191018_1) (https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/sost/autocephaly_and_the_archives). Several other lectures by the OCA Archivist in OCA parishes or for deanery clergy meetings scheduled for the 50th anniversary year of autocephaly were canceled due to the pandemic.

At its Fall 2020 Session, the Metropolitan Council decided to proceed with relocation of the OCA Archives by directing the Archives Advisory Committee to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) to house the OCA Archives. After careful deliberation, the RFP was drafted and issued in May 2021. Four responses were received by the deadline in July from: 1) St. Tikhon's Seminary; 2) St. Vladimir's Seminary; 3) Miami University of Ohio; and 4) the OCA Archivist, who proposed that the Archives continue to be maintained at the same location as the OCA Chancery. At a meeting in September, the Archives Advisory Committee expressed the need for further information from the applicants in order to fully evaluate the submitted proposals, but also stressed the urgency of relocation. Having heard a report on the submitted proposals, the Metropolitan Council at its fall session, voted by a narrow margin to limit consideration of proposals received to those from Miami University of Ohio and St. Vladimir's Seminary. Miami University withdrew its proposal just days after the meeting, leaving St. Vladimir's Seminary as the only venue under consideration. After a favorable site evaluation visit by an ad-hoc committee and careful consideration of other relevant factors, the Metropolitan Council, at its 2022 Spring Session, authorized "the Chancellor and Secretary of the OCA to engage SVOTS in logistical and contractual discussions, for the purpose of preparing a written agreement by July 15, 2022, for presentation and approval at the next session of the Metropolitan Council." These discussions are now underway and as of the writing of this report in late May, an agreement is being jointly drafted.

In November 2021, the OCA Archivist was invited to speak at an international symposium in Serbia "Links between Times: A Conference on the Centennial of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia (ROCOR)" (<https://www.oca.org/news/headline-news/oca-archivist-returns-from-conference-in-serbia>). His presentation was titled "The Relationship of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) and ROCOR from 1950 to the present according to the documents of the OCA Archives." The lecture and other interaction at the conference sought to provide international visibility for the OCA and its vision, to strengthen ties with ROCOR and to develop collaboration with the Serbian Church in archival research.

While the OCA Archives will no longer be housed at the chancery at this juncture, it will remain the property of the OCA and it will continue to serve the Church and academic researchers through the invaluable historical documents and other items in its collections. The new venue for the Archives at

the Florovsky Library at St. Vladimir's Seminary is a climate-controlled environment suitable for archival storage and will bring side by side, in a single central location, unparalleled bibliographic and archival resources. Relieved of past custodial tasks related to basement storage, the OCA Archivist will be focusing his attention on research to further the development of the historical vision of the OCA.

The theme of the 20th All-American Council "Becoming Vessels of Grace" anchored in vocations is manifested in the work of the Office of History and Archives in several ways. The Archivist strives to fulfill his vocation to promote the ongoing development of the historical legacy and vision of the Orthodox Church in America as an essential element of the Church's Mission, and to assure proper preservation and accessibility of the historical record of Orthodox Christianity on the North American continent. By fulfilling its own purpose, the Office seeks to support the ministries of parishes and institutions and the vocations of hierarchs and clergy and every member of the Church by providing for them grounding in the knowledge of the Church's history as found in archival documents to nurture their labors in becoming Vessels of Grace, in imitation of the Saints who came before us in this land.

In conclusion, I implore the prayers and ask for the support of the hierarchs, clergy and faithful for the continued work of historical witness and interpretation, and preservation of the OCA Archives for the Church.

Respectfully submitted,

Alexis Liberovsky,
OCA Archivist
Director – Office of History and Archives

Office of Review of Sexual Misconduct Allegations (ORSMA)

Membership: Ms Emily Waters LCSW, MPA, PhD Acting ORSMA Coordinator

Archpriest Alexander Rentel, Chancellor and Director

Consultants: Dr. Albert Rossi, NYS licensed psychologist and consultant; Mr. Robert Koory, Esq., legal counsel; Mr Bernard Wilson, Chief of Police, retired and consultant

Mandate

The Office of Review of Sexual Misconduct Allegations is responsible for assisting the Holy Synod of Bishops and the Church with matters concerning allegations of sexual misconduct. The Office shall be under the authority of the Office of the Metropolitan, who shall report to the Holy Synod of Bishops.

1. Facilitated seminarians training at St. Tikhon's Seminary on the PSPs, trauma, and best practices for prevention. Additional trainings are planned for Fall 2022 and beyond.
2. Centralized background check process for Stavropegial institutions
3. Revised, standardized, and implemented Sex Offender protocols for sex offenders wishing to join a parish.
4. Provided guidance and worked for the over 10 reported incidences to ORSMA's office.
5. Conducted 2022 Q1 and Q2 SMPAC meetings regarding PSPs and potential liabilities to address within policies.

The ORSMA office will continue to maintain a central repository of sexual misconduct cases and allegations and be the primary advisor along with SMPAC to the Holy Synod and Dioceses concerning the Policies, Standards, and Procedures on Sexual Misconduct. This information will be kept in both physical and electronic format, with many safeguards in place in both respects, to prevent information being hacked.

Sexual Misconduct Policy Advisory Committee (SMPAC)

Report of the Sexual Misconduct Policy Advisory Committee (SMPAC)

20th All-American Council

Metropolitan Tikhon, *ex officio*; Archpriest Alexander Rentel, *ex officio*, Chair; Priest Alessandro Margheritino, *ex officio*; Emily Waters, *ex officio*; Archpriest David Mezynski; Archpriest Justin Patterson; Protodeacon Peter Danilchick; Robert Koory, Esq.; Bernard Wilson.

Mandate

The Sexual Misconduct Policy Advisory Committee was created in 2010 to work with and assist the Office of Review of Sexual Misconduct Allegations. The Committee was initially known as the “Sexual Misconduct Allegations Review Committee.”

Authority, Responsibility and Supervision

The Committee is under the authority of the Holy Synod and is chaired by the Chancellor of the Church, who is the day-to-day supervisor of the Office. The Committee operates in an advisory capacity only and does not assume any responsibility for the handling of sexual misconduct allegations, because that responsibility properly belongs to the Diocesan Hierarchs and the Office, according to the revised Policies, Standards, and Procedures on Sexual Misconduct.

Background

The complexity of sexual misconduct allegations requires a multi-dimensional awareness of issues and skills in various disciplines, so that allegations of misconduct may be considered from several perspectives—spiritual, ethical, legal, clinical as well as pastoral. The members of the Committee have expertise and years of experience in these various spheres.

Duties

1. Provide advice on how to improve both the content and effectiveness of the Church’s revised Policies, Standards, and Procedures on Sexual Misconduct.
2. Assist in reviews of the extent to which the Church’s revised Policies, Standards, and Procedures on Sexual Misconduct are implemented in practice and how compliance with them is ensured.
3. Assist in finding and nominating qualified professionals, who would be called on to do investigations when occasions arise.
4. Assist in developing increased and improved training for clergy, Church employees, and applicable laypersons to enable a better understanding of their duties under the revised

Policies, Standards and Procedures on Sexual Misconduct, including their mandatory reporting obligations under various state laws.

5. Assist in any other requests for advice made by the Holy Synod of Bishops and the Office.

Initiatives and Projects since the 19th All-American Council

- Quarterly teleconferences to review policy questions, implementations of policies, and reporting to Holy Synod and Metropolitan Council.
- Refinement of background check process and procedures.
- Revisited the issue of length of investigations (e.g., number of Response Team members, coordinating schedules, workflow, cooperation of respondent and/or complainant, etc.)
- Review of annual PSP diocesan compliance reports
- Update various compliance forms available on oca.org
- Review of the Register Sex Offender policy
- Review of training programs to prevent misconduct
- Review and revision of PSPs and ORSMA practices

On the basis of the data received through the annual Diocesan reports, the Committee is pleased to note an improvement since 2019 in four important areas of compliance: adoption of the PSPs by the parish, ordained background checks, youth work backgrounds, and supervision policy. The results show marked improvement in all four categories, with average “grade” going from 61% in 2019, to 76% in 2020, to 86% in 2021. On the contrary, the youth worker training is showing no improvement but rather a small decline from 66% in 2020 to 63% in 2021.

The Committee is pleased to note the major decline in ORSMA over the past few years. Without a doubt, this is attributable to more the robust and intentional levels of compliance with the PSPs across the Church. On that note, the Committee wishes to offer gratitude to the Hierarchs and the Diocesan Chancellors for overseeing compliance. We also wish to thank our parish priests who, among their many other responsibilities, have continued to maintain our parishes safe.

In early 2021, His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon asked His Grace Bishop Daniel of Santa Rosa to form a committee to review the Policies, Standards, and Procedures on Sexual Misconduct and to assess the application of the PSP’s in relationship to Canon Law and how they specifically relate to the canonical procedure in those ecclesiastical court cases that include allegations of sexual misconduct.

Since the 19th All-American Council, the membership of the Committee has largely changed. Both the Chancellor and the Secretary, who are *ex officio* members, started their tenure after the last Council. Cindy Heise asked His Beatitude to step down from ORSMA and SMPAC after many faithful years of service. At the beginning of 2022, Emily Waters started as Acting ORSMA Coordinator and, in that capacity, joined SMPAC. Both Archpriest Alexander Garklavs and Dr Albert Rossi asked to step down from SMPAC after many years of diligent service. The Committee has recently welcomed Archpriest David Mezynski and Archpriest Justin Patterson in their place.

Fellowship of Orthodox Christians (FOCA)

Report of the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America (FOCA) to the 20th All American Council

MISSION:

Witnessing Our Faith by Charitable Works through Fellowship

We are the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America, an official organization of the

Orthodox Church in America, and our mission is to proclaim, share and reveal our Orthodox Christian Faith through service, fellowship and example.

We strive to accomplish this by:

- studying the tenets of our Faith
- supporting and encouraging Orthodox Youth ministries
- supporting and encouraging missionary growth of our church
- encouraging and promoting unity among all Orthodox jurisdictions
- establishing practical means for Orthodox Christians to endure lasting friendships on local and national levels through networking
- providing educational, cultural, social and athletic activities for the people of our Orthodox Faith

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD:

Spiritual Advisor – Archpriest Nicholas Wyslutsky, *Magadore, Ohio*

President - Allison Steffaro, *South River, New Jersey*

Vice President - Basil Kochan, *Magadore, Ohio*

Secretary – Danielle Ilchuk, *Ambridge, Pennsylvania*

Treasurer - Michael Bowan, *Hartland, Wisconsin*

Immediate Past President - Marge Kovach, *Bayonne, New Jersey*

OVERVIEW

The Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America has, throughout its history, served an important role in expanding the mission work of the Church in areas such as youth ministry, religious education, liturgical music, leadership development, financial assistance for the seminaries, and countless special projects. The original founders of the FOCA recognized a need to promote fellowship among Orthodox Christians beyond the boundaries of local parishes and the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America has persevered in this mission by bringing Orthodox Christians together in Faith, Fellowship, and Service to others for more than ninety years.

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon is the Spiritual Leader of the FOCA. This national organization, consisting of a network of local chapters, has two divisions: Junior division for youth ages 10-17 and Senior division for ages 18 and above. The National Executive Board is elected each year by the national convention body and oversees the projects, communication, and administration of the Fellowship.

INITIATIVES AND PROJECTS SINCE THE LAST AAC

The Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America continues to promote the work of the Church while bringing like-minded individuals together in social settings as we strive: “To witness our faith by charitable works through fellowship.” Our largest single charitable initiative to date is the \$300,000 raised in support of the Married Student Housing project at St. Tikhon’s Orthodox Theological Seminary. Chapter, District, and National fundraisers along with personal donations contributed to fulfilling this pledge at the 89th National FOCA Convention held in Atlanta in conjunction with the 18th All American Council.

Individual chapters and districts engage in local community outreach, service projects, religious, educational, athletic, and social events in addition to support of the following national programs including but not limited to:

- Scholarships for higher education
- *Gifts of Love* annual appeal in support of a particular cause
- Support for Seminarians provided by Chapters, Districts, Parishes, and individuals in the form of:
 - Fulfilling St. Nicholas “Wish lists” for families of married seminarian students at St. Tikhon’s Seminary and St. Vladimir’s Seminary. Gift cards are distributed to those at St. Herman’s Seminary given the expense of sending packages
 - Providing monthly financial assistance to seminary students in need of support
- National Bowling and Golf Tournaments participants range in age but enjoy the opportunity to come together for a weekend of friendly competition, worship, and fellowship
- Camping programs offer a place where youth can experience living within an Orthodox Christian community in an environment that nurtures life-long friendships and young adults have an opportunity to gain leadership experience as counselors

Since the last AAC our organization, like all others, had to suspend its “normal” activities during Covid. Our executive board felt the need to come up with ways to keep our members connected during this difficult time in a creative way using the internet and social media to meet the spiritual and fellowship needs of our membership. Our first service during Covid was St. Andrew’s Akaathist led by our spiritual advisor Fr. Nicholas Wyslutsky as well as 4 priests who served virtually from across the country. This service was so well received that we continued the event this past November.

In order to fulfill our mission to provide religious education, Fr. Ilya Gotlinsky took the membership on a virtual tour of The Lord's Crucifixion during great Lent and the Holy Land during Advent. Both of these tours were attended by hundreds of households. Our Youth had the opportunity to attend two virtual Youth Retreats; these were given during Great Lent and Advent as well. Once again, we were able to provide an opportunity for hundreds of our Orthodox Youth from the US (including Alaska) and Canada to gather to learn about our faith.

As Orthodox Christians we are blessed with beautiful liturgical musical arrangements and the choirs which sing them. During the Advent season, a call was placed for parish choirs from across the country to participate in a Christmas concert to broadcast live the day after Christmas. Many Choirs from across the OCA participated in this event, to date, over 2,000 people have had the opportunity to experience the beautiful signing of our Lord's Birth. With the success of this event, we asked choirs to submit pieces for a Pascal concert. This was broadcast on St. Thomas Sunday and like the first was a beautiful collection of songs from the Paschal Liturgy. You can enjoy both of these concerts on our YouTube page <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9yPeZIKg5JZUjm5mgDYRA>

While we were only virtually coming together as an organization, our membership was still able to fill the Christmas wish lists of over 100 seminarian families at St. Tikhon's and St. Vladimirs and sent over \$20,000 to St. Herman's in Alaska during the two year pandemic.

Conclusion

For more than nine decades, the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America has been assisting in the work of the Church while providing practical means for Orthodox Christians to endure lasting friendships on a local and national level. We strive to perpetuate a mutually beneficial relationship amongst our chapters, the national FOCA, parishes, and the national Church.

The importance of uniting Orthodox Christians of all ages in Faith, Fellowship, and Service is as pronounced today as it was in 1927. In particular, it is imperative that Orthodox Youth develop a supportive network of friends in the Faith, among whom they share the same Orthodox Christian values and views on morality, as they navigate this ever increasingly secular society. The Fellowship of Orthodox Christians has over 90 years of service to our Church. Our membership has year of knowledge, resources and networking to provide a

The FOCA has, from its founding, served as an arm of the Orthodox Church here in North America. Throughout its history, the former F.R.O.C. and now F.O.C.A. has responded to the most urgent of needs

in our church. Looking at the last few years, it has become increasingly apparent that one of the most urgent needs in the OCA is that of serving our youth.

At the most recent FOCA convention, a report was given regarding the status of youth needs in the OCA. It was observed that there was a need to have organization to move forward for the youth in the United States of America. Rev. Fr. Dimitri Ressetar, of blessed memory, stood at the microphone and stated, “we already have that. It is the FOCA.”

As an official organization of the Orthodox Church in America, the FOCA remains steadfast in our commitment to working in collaboration with the OCA Holy Synod of Bishops, Chancery Staff, and members of the Department of Youth, Young Adults for the Glory of God. This relationship ensures that we can continue to promote our mission of fellowship and the joining together of Orthodox Christians in service to other members of our Orthodox faith as well other charitable causes. It also affords us, as individuals, the opportunity to strive to be good stewards of the talents and resources with which we have been blessed. Membership in the FOCA provides the network, leadership, and resources by which we can accomplish this on a large scale outside of our individual parishes. What we do, we do together in faith and love, for the Glory of God.

PRAY STUDY TOIL BE TEMPERATE

Respectfully submitted,

Allison Steffaro
FOCA President

Monastery of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk

AAC Report for St. Tikhon's Monastery 2022

St. Tikhon's Monastery is America's oldest Orthodox Monastery founded by St. Tikhon of Moscow and Archbishop Arseny (Chagovtsov) in 1905 in South Canaan, Pennsylvania. Five canonized Saints have lived, walked, taught and loved St. Tikhon's Monastery along with countless others who gave their lives and treasures for the building of St. Tikhon's. The primary work of St. Tikhon's Monastery is prayer both personal and corporate for the entire world. Liturgy and the full cycle of services is offered daily for the entire Church both living and departed on behalf of all and for all. St. Tikhon's Monastery is connected with St. Tikhon's Seminary providing support for the training of future clergy for the Orthodox Church throughout the world. In partnership with Archbishop Michael and Fr. John Parker, Abbot Archimandrite Sergius co-labors with St. Tikhon's Brotherhood to teach and train the next generation of priests for the Orthodox Church.

Brotherhood

Currently the brotherhood numbers 21 fathers and brothers: Archimandrite Sergius (Abbot), Igumens Gabriel, Cyprian and Leonty, Hieromonks Innokenty and Herman, Hierodeacons Marc and David, Monks Nicodemus, Kyril, and Arseny, Riasaphore-monks Michael, Stephen, Stephanos, George, Paul, and Michael, Novices Andrew and Jeremiah, and Postulants Hesychios and Seraphim. We currently have one or two rooms open and then we would be at maximum capacity.

Music Program/Museum

The museum is open and its collection is completely intact. However, the museum has been consolidated and was renovated to present the collection to visitors in a new and updated beautiful format. The museum space is also now partially used for the music center for St. Tikhon's Monastery which now offers a one-year music program for choir directors. With four faculty, the music program is one of a kind and is offering formation in a much-needed area for the Church (that is currently not being formally offered anywhere else.) We encourage anyone that has the aptitude to apply for the residency program at St. Tikhon's in this amazing new program. Please visit sttikhonsmusicprogram.com for more details or to apply for the program.

Bookstore/Publishing

Since the 19th All-American Council, the monastery's press has undertaken several major publication projects. The Press has continued its focus on liturgical and devotional material to meet the high demand for these types of publications; *Orthodox Christian Prayers* is already in its seventh printing. Last year the monastery's press released *The Service Book for the Faithful*, a companion volume to the Service Book for Priest and Deacon which provides the texts of Vespers and the Divine Liturgy for the laity. Currently, a joint effort between our press and St. Vladimir's Press is underway to publish a

liturgical Psalter; editorial suggestions from peer reviewers are being incorporated at present and a final draft is expected by the end of this year. Once this work is complete, several other publications will be possible: a Horologion, a revised funeral service, and books for Holy Week. Among other notable publications released since 2017 are: *Great Vespers in the Common Book of Church Hymns*; *The Cross of Loneliness*, the correspondence of Saint Sophrony and Fr. Georges Florovsky; *Adventures in East Africa*, by His Eminence Abp. Makarios of Kenya; and *White Lilies*, letters and poems from a Romanian prison.

It is needless to say that the Covid-19 pandemic significantly affected our operations and sales. However, we used the opportunity to launch a new website and sales system that has greatly improved our online visibility and efficiency. Over this period, we saw our audience grow considerably. New publications and the sale of our monastery-roasted coffee through our website is helping us to reach customers who were not previously connected to the monastery or to the Orthodox Church in America. We have several publications planned that have the potential to greatly expand our impact on new audiences. However, publication and printing costs have significantly increased over the past four years and increased capital is necessary to make these efforts possible. We have begun the process of obtaining financial underwriting for future publications in the interest of sustaining our long-term mission. We also look forward to greater cooperation in joint efforts with St. Vladimir Seminary Press and the Department of Liturgical Music in order to more efficiently utilize resources.

As a special update, due to funding received from a several individuals at the 19th All American Council, we were able to publish the “you/your” *Hieraticon* Liturgy Book. Thank you for making this a reality!

Coffee Shop/Coffee roasting and Monastery products

The monastery roasts quality, organic micro-lot fair-trade coffee under the brand Burning Bush Coffee. We recently opened a franchise Burning Bush Coffee Cafe in Carbondale, Pennsylvania as an outreach and community service to our local people. For more info, please visit burningbushcoffee.com. The monastery also produces a wide variety of products and services for the church: monastery wine (a proprietary custom monastery recipe sourced from the oldest and now one of the only sacramental wineries in America), monastery hand-dipped candles, coffins, icon boards, icons, commissioned paintings and art, and large iconography projects installed across America. The brotherhood also teaches at the seminary, offers retreats, services local parishes and travels extensively with the miraculous St. Anna Icon to visit parishes and raise awareness about St. Tikhon's, Orthodox spirituality and monasticism.

Finances

The monastery is currently in a stable financial position thanks to many of our kind and generous benefactors to whom we are greatly indebted and are ever so thankful for. Anyone who loves St. Tikhon's is greatly beloved by the Brotherhood and by the Lord. Our current audited financial statements are available online at sttikhonsmonastery.org for review.

New Icon Studio

Thanks to a restricted endowment, the monastery has broken ground on a new icon studio that will provide classes and instruction to students over the course of a two or possibly three-year program. The building, designed by Andrew Gould, will be home to three instructors and up to 6 students. It is anticipated with God's help that the school will be opened by the fall of 2023. Please pray and stay tuned!

Final Thought

We recently had our 117th annual pilgrimage to the delight of all who visited. A great success, we invite everyone to return for next year's pilgrimage to be renewed and refreshed by the mercy and grace of God which are so tangible present here during that special weekend. We thank you for all your continued support and know that St. Tikhon's Monastery is a home for the Orthodox Church in America. All are remembered here and are offered to visit, stay for retreats, and attend services: everyone will always be welcome! We thank you for your continued love and support of St. Tikhon's Monastery.

Holy Myrrhbearers Monastery

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A Stavropegial monastic community for women under the omophorion of Metropolitan Tikhon.
As of May 2022, we number 3 life-professed members and a riassafor.

- Mother Raphaela, abbess
- Mother Katherine (farm and business manager)
- Mother Michaela (guest mistress, office work)
- Sister Piama, riassafor (general housekeeper and gardener)
- Mother Anna is with her family who are better able to care for her severe health problems.

We are a monastic community where women and pilgrims may come for a lifetime, or for shorter visits to enter the fullness of Christian calling. While the COVID epidemic has curtailed the number of guests we have seen recently, we still do offer space where individual guests and small groups of pilgrims may take time for solitude and silence, an experience of the traditional life of prayer away from cell phones and television and within a beautiful wild and rural farm environment. Mother Michaela acts as our guest mistress in addition to helping with all sorts of things from correspondence to cooking.

We trust that by living out our lives with the daily services and quiet offered by our environment, our growth may be like that of St. Herman's. He has always been true inspiration for us, even though his monastic community does out around him so that he died alone and forgotten by all but his immediate Eskimo neighbors.

In addition to our own daily monastic reader services, we and our guests depend on local clergy to provide occasional liturgies in our chapel. We attend Sunday liturgies at local parishes. Father Myron Oryhon and Father James Dutko serve as confessors to the community in addition to serving occasional weekday and feast day liturgies.

Mother Katherine oversees much of our business office with the help of John Elnicky, a friend from Herkimer, but her main care is for our farm aided by our handyman. The chickens, sheep and goats that provide us with eggs, milk and wool do also maintain their pastures but the main work, of course, comes from the humans involved. Mother Katherine does all sorts of things from providing food and water to midwifery and helping Rob pound fence posts.

Sister Piama is a true “Jack of all trades.” In addition to helping to cook and clean, she does our grocery shopping, runs errands, knits hats, gloves and the small animals that sell in local markets and cares for many indoor plants that help create the beauty we live with, even indoors in the wintertime.

The fruits of our labor, from liturgical texts to knitted hats, may be found at local farmers markets, the Artisans’ Guild in Oneonta and when we are having difficulties with our online store, purchased by a telephone call to the monastery.

We invite you to spend time with us. Our guest facilities are small but comfortable, set in a beautiful and scenic environment. Our guest house itself sits on our pond, compete with fish, geese and other wild creatures. The woods and the wetlands also provide beautiful places for walks.

There is more to growth in the Church than numbers and we invite you to grow with us in those many other ways.

New Skete Monasteries

Monks of New Skete Report to the 20th all-American council

1. Name and Mission of the Institution/Monastery

The Monks of New Skete

Mandate:

New Skete is a monastic community of men and women rooted in the tradition of the Eastern Church. Through prayer, worship, and the work of our hands, we seek to respond to the mystery of God and the Gospel's power to transform human living. Welcoming all, we seek to bridge the old with the new and to witness to the sacredness of all creation.

To carry out this mission...

We embrace our responsibility to foster the single-minded search for God in each other and in those we meet.

We are open to others of all beliefs through retreats, days of recollection and liturgical services.

We interact with the wider community in accord with our way of life.

We are firmly committed to the equality of all persons, and, in very simple ways, we reverence all of creation as the dwelling place of God.

Our Vision:

We aim to be responsive to the prophetic character of our vocation which from the very beginning of monasticism in the desert of Skete has made monks and nuns responsible not only for attaining the end for which they were created but for that of all God's people.

As heirs of these primitive Christian monks and nuns, we want to live in harmony with their spirit especially that of the Eastern monastic fathers and mothers. In adapting our own everyday life from tradition, we hope to show in our own lives the perennial nature of Christian monasticism, especially for contemporary America.

Though the emphasis may vary in monastic life at different times and places, our life emphasizes the liturgical offices of each day. Every aspect of our life receives impetus and nourishment from the daily

and seasonal celebrations of the church. We live in union with the praying church. Our worship seeks to edify, to inspire and to raise us all to that reality for which we were made: union with God.

Monastics strive for enlightenment and wisdom by seeking to grow in knowledge and understanding. Therefore we continue day-by- day to reflect on all aspects of the spiritual life.

We live with the conviction that an authentic and vibrant monasticism is an essential ingredient to healthy Church life. By nature, the monastic vocation is contemplative and apostolic, challenging both the Church and the world at large to fuller life.

Monasticism has always incarnated itself within a particular cultural context, so throughout our history we have worked to express the mystery and dynamism of our vocation in a manner appropriate to our culture and times.

Monastics pray in the secret of their hearts, in the privacy of their cells, fostering a spirit of silence and recollection which permeates all other aspects of our lives. Personal prayer is cultivated with the simplicity and freedom of the children of God. Like all else, personal prayer is nourished by and benefits from the choral worship of the entire community.

In accord with the simplicity that characterizes monastic life, we earn our daily bread by our own hands. As all the fathers and mothers of the monastic life have taught and practiced themselves, so do we value and esteem this work. We find in work a time-honored means of self-discipline and growth.

We hold in special esteem the virtue of hospitality. Though our own means are limited, we extend to all who come our way the basic courtesies of Christian charity and hospitality. Whenever possible, we are ready and willing to provide whatever may be asked of us in a friendly and cheerful way with respect and compassion. What we do to others so do we do to Christ, mindful always that we are brothers and sisters of all.

2. General membership list

Br Christopher (Savage)	Prior, Hieromonk
Br Luke (Dorr)	Econom
Br Marc (Labish)	Hieromonk
Br Peter (Kushner)	Archdeacon
Br Stavros (Winner)	
Br Ambrose (Miles)	
Br Gregory (Tobin)	
Brother David	Novice

3. A General Overview/reflection in relation to the theme, “Becoming Vessels of Grace”

We are passionately committed to living out our monastic vocation in a way that is both faithful to tradition and to the times we live in. While we strive to live the injunction to pray always, we also gather twice per day to celebrate the offices of Matins and Vespers and the Divine Liturgy on Sundays and Feast days. In this, we are conscious of being a place of prayer for the Church, indeed for the world. That is our chief responsibility for the Church. There is no doubt that monasticism is a counter-cultural reality in today's world, and that this creates challenges for monastics to create new ways to communicate their vision to the world. Many people question what relevance monasticism has since they presume monks and nuns live in a very insular way. We believe nothing could be further from the truth. Aside from offering hospitality to retreatants, pilgrims, and guests, within the context of our liturgical life we stand as a witness of prayer and intercession for our brothers and sisters in the world. This is part of the hidden mystery and significance of monastic life, and leads us to carry out our vocation with a sense of gratitude for the abundant life we have been given.

We make our living through the breeding of German Shepherd Dogs and the training of various breeds of dogs for outside owners. It has often been noted publicly that we have made a real contribution in these fields and that our work has increased the quality of life between many owners and their dogs by helping them understand the spiritual dimension present in the human/dog relationship. We also engage in various other endeavors, including the writing of books on dog training and spirituality, offering hospitality for retreatants, and run a small gift shop to make the money needed to keep body and soul together.

We engage in development in part to fulfill the requirements of being a 501(c)3 Not for Profit organization, in part to gain the funds we need to operate and maintain our tax-exempt status, but also, and perhaps most importantly, to engage and involve those who cannot live the monastic life in the life and mission of our community.

As stated above, we offer hospitality to various and sundry guests. We welcome all sorts of visitors, Christians as well as non-Christians, Orthodox as well as Non-Orthodox. We are also the center for the sacramental life of a number local people (our chapel community). We also offer the ministries of retreats and days of recollection as well as spiritual direction to those who wish to avail themselves of these opportunities.

4. Initiatives and Projects since the 19th AAC and how as a community we address the theme of “Becoming Vessels of Grace”

Events at New Skete: Each year we host a pilgrimage on the Saturday of the octave of the Transfiguration. Ordinarily we have a live event that features Divine Liturgy, a guest speaker, and afternoon events, however because of the pandemic we have had to make the past two pilgrimages virtual. However, these virtual events have still been well attended and this past year we were especially pleased to have Fr John Chrysavgis who delivered a very inspiring talk called, “Caring for the Soul of the Planet”. Our hope is to have a live event this August when we are planning to have Orthodox theologian Gayle Woloshak as our guest speaker.

-Prior to the pandemic in January of 2019, during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, New Skete hosted an ecumenical day of reflection on the environment with the theme, "Caring for Our Common Home". Approximately 35 participants from Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant backgrounds spent the day listening to several formal presentations and then breaking down into small group discussions that followed each presentation. A common Vespers concluded the day.

We continue to host many group tours, with groups coming from other churches and organizations in the area.

-Gleanings: Finally, after a number of years in preparation, this past year we published a retrospective collection of selections from Gleanings, the community's journal from 1973 to 1980. The book was published by Alexander Press.

-The Companions of New Skete: In January of 2017 we launched the Companions of New Skete as a non-residential community of friends that wish to be more connected with New Skete. The response to this initiative has continued to be encouraging and we have approximately 220 members. Since the pandemic, communication has been conducted primarily over the Internet, and the Companions receive spiritual meditations three times a week to help support their spiritual practice. There is a rule of life that they follow, and we are hoping to gradually expand what we can offer them by way of periodic webinars and special retreat events.

-The Volunteer Residency Program: Last year we experimented with developing a program for individuals who are interested in living with us for an extended period of time. We are calling this "The Volunteer Residency Program". There are no strings attached to this program, save for being serious about experiencing the monastic life and deepening one's own spiritual practice. Such people may or may not be interested in a monastic vocation. The program is intended to give a person the opportunity to be immersed in our life and to be a source of help to us in the various types of work we do. A number of people have taken advantage of this opportunity and have been enriched by the experience.

Retreats: We plan to continue and expand our hosting of spiritual retreats here at the monastery. While during the pandemic the guesthouse was largely closed, we have been gradually allowing fully vaccinated individuals and groups to spend time on retreat. Often, retreatants come trying to discern their own personal vocations, and we do our best to guide and support that discernment in a helpful, non-manipulative way. We continue to be open to presenting a weekend retreat to individual parishes as well as organizations such as "The Fellowship of Orthodox Christians" at individual chapters.

Vocations: We are looking for creative ways to develop monastic vocations in the Church, through videos, podcasts, and other forms of social media. We continue to host guided retreats for individuals who are exploring the possibility of a monastic vocation. These retreats allow interested individuals to experience monastic life firsthand for several days to a week, in a program designed specifically to that interest.

All of the ministries at the heart of our life are not for ourselves alone, but truly “for the life of the world”. Our monastic life is formally dedicated to doing whatever we can within the context of our vocation to make the Gospel come alive for people in our day and age.

7. Conclusion

In Jn 10:10 Jesus says, “I have come that they may have life, and have it more abundantly.” Since our beginning in 1966, New Skete, as a monastic community, has dedicated itself to bringing a bit of that Gospel abundance to both the Church and world at large. As disciples of Jesus, our life is truly not for ourselves alone, but for the life of the world, being fueled by the vision of the Lord Jesus. As monks, we believe our vocation is to live the monastic life as honestly and authentically as possible, in a manner appropriate for our day and age. Our hope is that in some small way this may further God’s vision for world by sharing the fruits of our life with those we come in contact with.

OUR LADY OF THE SIGN -- NUNS OF NEW SKETE Report to the 20th All-American Council

New Skete is a monastic community of men and women rooted in the tradition of the Eastern Church. Through prayer, worship, and the work of our hands, we seek to respond to the mystery of God and the Gospel's power to transform human living. Welcoming all, we seek to bridge the old with the new and to witness to the sacredness of all creation. To carry out this mission... We embrace our responsibility to foster the single-minded search for God in each other and in those we meet.

We are open to others of all beliefs through retreats, days of recollection and liturgical services. We interact with the wider community in accord with our way of life. We are firmly committed to the equality of all persons and we reverence all of creation as the dwelling place of God.

We aim to be responsive to the prophetic character of our vocation which from the very beginning of monasticism in the desert of Skete has made monks and nuns responsible not only for attaining the end for which they were created but for that of all God’s people.

As heirs of these primitive Christian monks and nuns, we want to live in harmony with their spirit especially that of the Eastern monastic fathers and mothers. In adapting our own everyday life from tradition; we hope to show in our own lives the perennial nature of Christian monasticism, especially for contemporary America. Though the emphasis may vary in monastic life at different times and places, our life emphasizes the liturgical offices of each day. Every aspect of our life receives impetus and nourishment from the daily and seasonal celebrations of the church. We live in union with the praying church. Our worship seeks to edify, to inspire and to raise us all to that reality for which we were made: union with God.

Monastics strive for enlightenment and wisdom by seeking to grow in knowledge and understanding. Therefore, we continue day-by-day to reflect on all aspects of the spiritual life. We live with the conviction that an authentic and vibrant monasticism is an essential ingredient to healthy Church life. By nature, the monastic vocation is contemplative and apostolic, challenging both the Church and the world at large to fuller life. Monasticism has always incarnated itself within a particular cultural context, so throughout our history we have worked to express the mystery and dynamism of our vocation in a manner appropriate to our culture and times.

Monastics pray in the secret of their hearts, in the privacy of their cells, fostering a spirit of silence and recollection which permeates all other aspects of our lives. Personal prayer is nourished by and benefits from the choral worship of the entire community.

In accord with the simplicity that characterizes monastic life, we earn our daily bread by our own hands. As all the fathers and mothers of the monastic life have taught and practiced themselves, so do we value and esteem this work. We find in work a time-honored means of self-discipline and growth.

We hold in special esteem the virtue of hospitality. Though our own means are limited, we extend to all who come our way the basic courtesies of Christian charity and hospitality. Whenever possible, we are ready and willing to provide whatever may be asked of us in a friendly and cheerful way with respect and compassion. What we do to others so do we do to Christ, mindful always that we are brothers and sisters of all.

Membership: Sr. Cecelia (Harvey), Prioress; Sr. Patricia (Lawless), Econom; Sr. Rebecca (Cown), Secretary; Patricia Cassidy, Resident

While we strive to live the injunction to pray always, we also gather twice per day to celebrate the offices of Matins and Vespers and the Divine Liturgy on Sundays and Feast days. In this, we are conscious of being a place of prayer for the Church, indeed for the world. There is no doubt that monasticism is a counter-cultural reality in today's world. Many people question what relevance monasticism has since they presume monks and nuns live in a very insular way. We believe nothing could be further from the truth. Aside from offering hospitality to retreatants, pilgrims, and guests, within the context of our liturgical life we stand as a witness of prayer and intercession for our brothers and sisters in the world. This is part of the hidden mystery and significance of monastic life, and leads us to carry out our vocation with a sense of gratitude for the abundant life we have been given.

We make our living through the Liturgical Arts such as icon painting, retreats, hospitality and especially by producing bakery goods such as our well-known cheesecakes, cheese spreads, and pancake mix. We also engage in various other endeavors, including books on spirituality, and run a small gift shop to make the money needed to keep body and soul together. While not a fund-raising endeavor, we also help the monks of New Skete caring for their German Shepherd dogs and raising an occasional puppy. We engage in development in part to fulfill the requirements of being a 501(c)3 Not for Profit organization, in part to gain the funds we need to operate and maintain our tax-exempt status, but also,

and perhaps most importantly, to engage and involve those who cannot live the monastic life in the life and mission of our community.

As stated above, we offer hospitality to various and sundry guests. We welcome all sorts of visitors, Christians as well as non-Christians, Orthodox as well as Non-Orthodox. We are also the center for the sacramental life of a number of local people (our chapel community). We also offer the ministries of spiritual direction to those who wish to avail themselves of these opportunities.

Initiatives and Projects Since the 19th All American Council

Publishing: A book entitled, “Gleanings A Retrospective” has recently been printed. Certain articles that were previously in separate issues were compiled for this book.

The Companions of New Skete: In January of 2017 we launched the Companions of New Skete as a non-residential community of friends that wish to be more connected with New Skete. The response to this initiative has been encouraging and we have over 200 members so far. Communication is conducted primarily over the Internet, and Companions have been receiving meditations three times a week to help support their spiritual practice. There is a rule of life that they follow, and we are hoping to gradually expand what we can offer them by way of periodic webinars and special retreat events.

The Volunteer Residency Program: We have developed a program for individuals who are interested in living with us for an extended period of time. We are calling this “The Volunteer Residency Program”. There are no strings attached to this program, save for being serious about experiencing the monastic life and deepening one’s own spiritual practice. Such people may or may not be interested in a monastic vocation.

Renovations: Perhaps the most significant project that took place over the course of 2017 was the renovation of Holy Transfiguration Temple. This was a project that took up much energy, raised significant funds from friends and benefactors and whose end result has pleased everyone. The temple has been restored to its previous beauty, but now with many improvements and enhancements: new siding and roof, new cupolas, handicap accessible entrances, new lighting, all new insulation of walls and ceiling, AC for the warmer months, wood flooring in the altar area, a much larger sacristy area, and new landscaping that will transpire this coming spring. It is certainly something that we can take pride in and represents our hope in a viable future.

Plans, Initiatives and Projects for the Future

We plan to continue our hosting of spiritual retreats here at the monastery. While our guest area can accommodate one to three individuals, we share in the two day-long retreats (in Lent and during the Fall) which attracts close to 60 people. We are also open to presenting a weekend retreat to organizations such as “The Fellowship of Orthodox Christians” at individual chapters.

We intend to use the Companions of New Skete as a source of renewal for people who are looking to integrate contemplative values into their daily lives. We believe that this is not only an important outreach of the monastery but is a concrete way to help support companions who are getting more fully involved in their parishes and churches.

We intend to look for creative ways to develop monastic vocations in the Church, through videos, podcasts, and other forms of social media. We will continue offering times for “Seeker’s” each year for individuals who are exploring the possibility of a monastic vocation. These events would allow interested individuals to experience monastic life firsthand for several days to a week, in a program designed specifically to that interest.

All of the ministries at the heart of our life are not for ourselves alone, but truly “for the life of the world”. Our monastic life is formally dedicated to doing whatever we can within the context of our vocation to make the Gospel come alive for people in our day and age.

Conclusion In JN 10:10 Jesus says, “I have come that they may have life, and have it more abundantly.” Since our beginning, New Skete has dedicated itself to bringing a bit of that Gospel abundance to both the Church and world at large. As disciples of Jesus, our life is truly not for ourselves alone, but for the life of the world, being fueled by the vision of the Lord Jesus. As nuns, we believe our role is to live the monastic life as honestly and authentically as possible, in a manner appropriate for our day and age. Our hope is that in some small way this may further God’s vision for world by sharing the fruits of our life with those we come in contact with.

St. Catherine's Representation Church

Staff

Archpriest Daniel Andrejuk, Dean and Representative; Archpriest Christopher Hill; Priest Pavel Zuev Secretary of Podvorie; Deacon Afanasi Ogeruk, not officially assigned but has served in the parish for the past year and a half. Starosta Irina Novikova, 2 individuals at bookstore, 3 security, 1 grounds keeper, 1 cleaning

The report is divided into two sections. First part of the report is focused on the responsibilities as the Dean of St Catherine Church and the life of the parish. Second part of the report focuses on the responsibilities as the Representative of His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon to Moscow Patriarchate.

The primary focus of St Catherine Church is the liturgical life of the parish. The church is open from 8 am until 7pm and services are conducted daily. Details of the schedule of services can be viewed at our website ocapodvorie.org. The uniqueness of St Catherine Church in Moscow is once a month Divine Liturgy and Akathist to St Herman is served in English. Every Sunday the Gospel and Epistle is read in both languages. Feasts of significance to St Catherine parish – December 7th Greatmartyr Catherine, July 2nd – St John of Shanghai and San Francisco, August 9th – St Herman of Alaska, October 6th – St Innocent of Alaska.

Another important aspect of the life of the parish is outreach programs. Our most popular outreach program is children's choir under the direction of Matushka Vera. Children sing responses during Divine Liturgy every Sunday.

Our English club meets once a week. Charity shop is open daily. AA meetings take place once a week. Sunday school is divided into three groups and it meets on Sundays following Divine Liturgy.

Years 2020 and 2021 were a bit challenging because of COVID restrictions. In March of 2020 all parishes were closed and services were allowed to be conducted with one priest and one choir member.

Attendance dropped and the financial aspect of the parish became quite difficult especially in the year 2020.

In the year 2021 we were able to make some changes inside the altar, new altar table, table of oblation and complete restoration of the walls with icons and kiots.

Plans and architectural drawings have been completed for new iconostasis, ready to be presented to His Holiness Patriarch Kirill and His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon for their blessing.

Second part of the report focuses on the responsibilities as the representative of His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon to Moscow Patriarchate.

As the representative I am required to participate in certain events in the life of Moscow Patriarchate and Patriarch of Moscow. Again, as COVID restrictions were put in place our contact with the Patriarch of Moscow became very limited until recently.

Our representation in Moscow also maintains a close relationship with US and Canadian Embassies. US and Canadian Ambassadors come to St Catherine's on September 11th for panikhida remembering those who have died during terrorist attacks.

Another important aspect of our work involves maintaining a good relationship with other Autocephalous Churches. Serving at their podvories here in Moscow and often making visitations abroad. Prior to the pandemic, I have made trips to Czech Lands, Slovakia, Poland, Georgia, Lebanon.

In November of 2021 we welcomed His Grace Bishop Alexis of Alaska. His Grace during his visit to Russia was able to ordain Nicholas Cragle (OCA seminarian in Moscow Theological Seminary) to the holy diaconate. Ordination took place at St Catherine Church on November 14th.

St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary

St Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary

MANDATE

As noted in its foundational documents: "The primary mission of the Seminary lies in providing the necessary theological, liturgical, spiritual, and moral foundations for Orthodox men to become, as God so wills, good shepherds of His Holy Orthodox Church". Acting off of its stated purpose, the Seminary provides the spiritual formation and training of the next generation of missionary priests for service in the fields of North America and beyond.

In addition to its primary mission, The Seminary also recognizes that many individuals choose to enroll in a professional theological training program for the fulfillment of needs other than those of ordained ministry. Therefore, St. Tikhon's Seminary continues to support all honorable reasons for matriculation at the Seminary and participation in class.

In speaking about the mission of the Seminary, it is needful to highlight its close and abiding relationship to St. Tikhon's Monastery and its Brotherhood. The academic life of the Seminary and the formation of our students receive do not begin in the classroom, but rather have their starting point in our community gathered in collective worship in the services of the Monastery Church. The deep well of living water that springs from the services, spills over into the relationship our students have with members of the Brotherhood that serve as spiritual fathers and exemplars of the Christian life. Through these relationships our students learn how to become "vessels of Grace" that will minister to Christ Holy flock as true servants of His Gospel.

Initiatives and Projects Since the 19th All American Council

Since the Council held in St. Louis in July 2018, St. Tikhon's Seminary can report several significant initiatives and projects that are bringing vibrancy to the life of our Seminary community.

Campus Improvements: Through the close collaboration between the Seminary's Administration and energized Board members, this period has seen significant improvements to the school's campus. These have included a complete renovation of the Seminary's Convocation Center and the Faculty wing of our Main Building. This wing includes a Shrine nearing completion which was the place of the repose of St. Nikolai of Zicha in 1956. To provide for relaxing and conducive spaces for collaborative work and collegial gathering, a new Administrative Conference Room and Faculty Sitting Room had been added to the Seminary's Main Building. The Seminary has also revamped a space within the building that serves as an Ancient Faith Studio and has provided for a Children's reading room to be utilized by Seminarians and their families. The dormitory rooms were repainted throughout, and the entire dorm has been beautified. During this very AAC, a substantial new kitchen is being added to the dormitory. Generous gifts have allowed for split-unit air conditioning to be added to our classrooms, to the St. Nikolai Chapel, and to the refectory.

While in the planning stages, the Seminary has partnered with the premier Scranton Architectural firm of Hemmler and Camayd to bring about preliminary conceptual renderings of a new Library facility for the campus. The Seminary also is in the planning stages of the development of Married Student housing duplex units to be placed on a 60-acre property acquired by the Seminary in 2018.

Human Resource Development: In addition to the capital improvements being made at the school, the Seminary has made significant strides in the area of faculty and staff development. Since the time of the last Council, the Seminary has seen the hiring and second term appointment of its Dean Father John Parker, as well as the completion of two successful open searches in 2021 which has brought us a new Director of the St. Patriarch Tikhon's Library, Mr. Brian Seraphim Cardell, as well as a new Associate Professor of Dogmatic Theology, Fr. Demetrios Harper. Beyond these hires, the Seminary is continuing Faculty development, with a present search underway for a full-time faculty position in Pastoral Arts and Praxis which is scheduled to be filled 1 July 2023.

While the Seminary is saying a bittersweet farewell to a generation of Faculty that have faithfully served the institution for over three decades, through the development efforts described above, St. Tikhon's is diligently working to provide for a solid core faculty for many years to come, and laying a solid foundation for the future in terms of its educational curriculum.

A generous \$50,000 Lily Grant is enabling St Tikhon's to study and make improvement in many areas of life, including: a) enhancing our development and fund-raising efforts; b) the planning and beginning of the resident music program at the Monastery; c) the possibility of online education for up to the first full year of seminary; d) a national vocations initiative; e) a long-range plan for clergy continuing education.

Programs of Study

Programs of Study: Presently St. Tikhon's offers a three-year Master of Divinity (M.Div.) Program to graduates of North American accredited colleges, universities, or seminaries, who either have a baccalaureate degree (B.A., B.S., etc.), or who may wish to fulfill the baccalaureate equivalency requirement through articulated transfer of credit from an accredited two- or four-year college, university, or seminary. As mentioned above, the Seminary is in the investigative stages of providing for an online, low residency first year of study for the M.Div. Program.

Beyond its M.Div. Program, St. Tikhon's Seminary offers non-degree instructional programs in the form of Clergy Continuing Education Programming, and lectures geared for public edification, which through the aid of digital media are broadcast live for the benefit of the broader church.

Institutional Relationships: Apart from articulated agreements and consortial arrangements with other institutions of higher education and accreditation with the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada (ATS), the Seminary's Library is a member of the American Theological Library Association (ATLA), the nation's largest theological library consortium, as well as the Southeastern Pennsylvania Theological Library Association (SEPTLA). Through the libraries of SEPTLA,

in particular, Seminary students and faculty enjoy direct access to more than 2 million volumes of books and periodical literature in the various theological and related disciplines.

The Seminary was reaccredited for seven years with the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) following a comprehensive site visit in November 2016 and is presently in the process of institutional self-study with the goal of accreditation reaffirmation in Fall of 2023.

Demographics

The teaching and learning process at St. Tikhon's Seminary is overseen by 6 full-time/ core faculty members that are supported by 10 adjunct professors. These faculty members serve a diverse student body from across several jurisdiction, with the largest percentage coming from the Orthodox Church in America. In this last academic year (2021-2022), the Seminary had a total full-time enrollment of 43 M.Div. students, with 30 students coming from various dioceses of the Orthodox Church in America. A more detailed presentation of student demographics is presented in the chart below:

*Enrollments AY2018-2019 to AY2021-2022 **

Academic Year	Full-time Enrolled M.Div.	OCA Students	Other Jurisdictions
2018-2019	46	33	13
2019-2020	43	31	12
2020-2021	40	24	16
2021-2022	44	30	14

*Enrollments taken from the beginning of the Academic Year

From the chart one can see that the majority of our students come to St. Tikhon's with the intention on serving the Orthodox Church in America. Other jurisdictions have included students of the Antiochian Archdiocese, Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, Bulgarian Patriarchate, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese, and American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese. These figures also include cohorts of students that have studied with us from the Malankara Orthodox Church.

From those that have come for formation for ministry, over the period of 2018-2022, 52 students have graduated from the Seminary, and have gone on to various ministries within the Church. A description of graduation rates and service to the Church are provided in the chart below:

Graduation and Placement Rates AY2018-2019 to AY2021-2022

Academic Year	Graduates	Holy Orders	%	Lay Leadership	%	Further Education	%	Other	%
2018-2019	13	6	46.2	3	23.1	1		3	23.1
2019-2020	15	12	80.0	0	0	1	6.7	2	13.3
2020-2021	15	8	53.3	2	13.3	0	0.0	5	33.3
2021-2022	9	7	77.8	2	22.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
TOTAL	52	33	63.5	7	13.5	2	3.8	10	19.2

Over the last four academic years 77.0% of our graduates have gone on to service in the Church in ordained ministry or positions of lay leadership. In keeping with our mission the vast majority of these graduates are serving parishes of various diocese of the Orthodox Church throughout North America.

Resources and Operating Budget

As the Church labors for the extension of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth through the best use of time, talent, and treasure by the People of God, so too, the Seminary labors to achieve its purpose and fulfill its mission through good stewardship of human, financial, physical, and institutional resources. Denominational seminaries in the United States are run on tight budgets. St. Tikhon's is no exception. Over the period time since the last All-American Council, the Seminary has been blessed by the generosity of donors that have provided not only for our operating budget, but also for significant beautification projects that have aesthetically uplifted parts of our campus buildings and facilities.

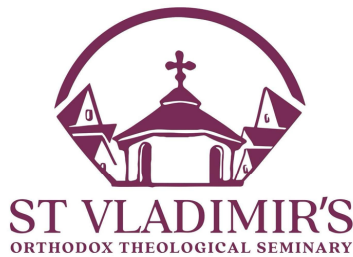
A presentation of overall budget information for fiscal years 2018-2021 are provided in the Table below:

Fiscal Year	Revenue and Support	Expenses
2018	\$2,194,483	\$2,299,919
2019	\$3,245,304	\$2,470,742
2020	\$1,977,503	\$1,914,995
2021	\$3,177,208	\$2,206,755

Plans, Initiatives and Projects for the Future

As mentioned above, St Tikhon's has a number of major projects either in the works or under investigation, including: the feasibility of a new library, an online component to the first year of seminary, an increase in on-campus married student housing, and the revision of the curriculum. All these take place in the context of the building of the next generation of faculty members, and more immediately our ATS Accreditation renewal process.

St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary



St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary REPORT TO THE 20th ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL June 2018–May 2022

INTRODUCTION:

At the founding of Saint Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary (SVOTS) in 1938, the vision articulated by the hierarchs was for an academy that would form highly educated clergy for a highly educated America, so that the clergy could present Orthodoxy in this new cultural environment effectively. Our primary mission remains the same.

“Saint Vladimir's Seminary has a long history of scholarly and pastoral leadership that is visionary, courageous, and compelling—leadership made for America: whether in making the case for an autocephalous church, reviving long-forgotten liturgical tradition, or articulating the ancient faith for a new generation.”

This quote, taken from the “Compelled for Such a Time as This” document is a teaser that I hope will encourage all of you to read the full document that is available at this AAC at the SVOTS Information Booth and elsewhere.

We have been “compelled”, as a seminary, to respond to the challenges that all North American theological schools are facing. Nearly 60 of the ATS-accredited seminaries, since 2009, have been forced to close or to merge. This is a wake-up call that we can see as a crisis or an opportunity. We have chosen the latter, and are actively working to secure the future of SVOTS so that, with your help, we will:

1. Train the next generation of priests;
2. Equip local parishes to be effective and thrive in a very different ministry climate;
3. Coordinate and collaborate with Church leadership to ensure the health of Orthodoxy;
4. Expand the reach of Orthodox ideas through publishing, online and digital experiences, and digital engagement;
5. Ensure the Truth is proclaimed loudly regardless of the politics or societal trends of the day;

6. Position St. Vladimir's Seminary to be a catalyst for the future of Orthodoxy and facilitate its expansion in North America and around the world.

I am pleased to report with confidence that St Vladimir's Seminary is capable of responding to these needs, of expanding its work to strengthen and grow Orthodoxy in North America. With your support and prayers, we are prepared to take significant risks to ensure our place in the future of the OCA and Orthodoxy by incorporating new, innovative programs through improved technology and facilities and additional faculty and staff for both residential and online theological education and formation.

ATS Accreditation:

The Association of Theological Schools (ATS) officially reaffirmed the accreditation status of St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary (SVOTS) in 2021. The Seminary's accreditation is now approved through July of 2028.

The official ATS accreditation report was overwhelmingly positive and affirmed the Seminary's current strengths, notably an emphasis on a "life of formation," its pan- and inter-Orthodox diversity, and a commitment by the administration and faculty to a mission-based and communication-oriented culture. It should be noted that there were no notations or warnings given.

Public Events:

The number of public events since 2018 (not including graduations or student/community events), either held by SVOTS or co-hosted by SVOTS is 59, with number 60 coming in September!

These events are concerts, conferences, academic symposia, lectures, educational events (including Summer Music Institutes and an 8-hour "Zoom-a-Thon" with our professors), and alumni gatherings. The majority of these have been on campus or in the greater New York City area, but some took place in other cities such as Washington D.C., Cleveland, Dallas, Seattle, and others; some events were online or hybrid. The overwhelming majority of these events have been FREE to attend.

A number of these recent events have drawn hundreds of registrants from multiple countries!

Marketing:

Since 2018, the Seminary has put an emphasis on general marketing and communication strategies to help further its mission and spread the gospel. Some of the marketing activities include: a new seminary website, new seminary logo, new logo for the Sacred Arts Institute, re-branded materials for fundraising and recruitment purposes, newly forged mission/vision/values statements, and enhanced social media presence.

Ordinations and Elevations:

Since 2018, among St Vladimir's student body and alumni fellowship, we have seen:

- 2 bishops consecrated;
- 43 priestly ordinations;
- 40 diaconal ordinations;
- 17 elevations in rank or ecclesiastical awards.

Clinical Pastoral Education:

Earlier this year, our Seminary was successfully re-accredited by ACPE, The Standard for Spiritual Care and Education, to offer Clinical Pastoral Education courses as a satellite of the Center for Pastoral Education, Jewish Theological Seminary.

Moving forward, Seminary administration is exploring models for offering Parish-based CPE again, possibly as in a hybrid mode or using online platforms for supervision, with students as interns in parishes across the nation or even internationally.

St Vladimir's Seminary Student Body:

Thanks be to God, our student body is strongly OCA and pan- and inter-Orthodox! The number of seminarians each year since 2018 is approximately 70-80 on average across our degree programs. Since 2018, 40 of those seminarians have been from the OCA. The next largest number is from the Antiochian Archdiocese (38). In total, our seminarians since 2018 have represented 21 Eastern and Oriental Orthodox jurisdictions:

1. Orthodox Church in America;
2. Antiochian Archdiocese;
3. Greek (GOA and other Greek jurisdictions including Greece and Australia);
4. American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese;
5. Patriarchate of Alexandria;
6. Armenian;
7. Orthodox Church of Albania;
8. Bulgarian Patriarchate;
9. Coptic;
10. Eritrean;
11. Ethiopian;
12. Orthodox Church of Finland;
13. Georgian;
14. Malankara (Autocephalous and Patriarchal Jurisdictions);
15. Polish Orthodox Church;
16. Romanian (Patriarchate of Romania, Metropolia of the Americas, as well as the Romanian Episcopate of the OCA);
17. ROCOR;

18. Russian (Moscow Patriarchate);
19. Serbian; 20. Syriac Orthodox;
21. Ukrainian.

SVS Press:

Saint Vladimir's Seminary (SVS) Press remains one of the only non-subsidized presses among ATS Seminaries that generates profit. Since the last AAC in 2018, the Press has produced:

- 44 titles published between 2018-2022;
- 3 Children's books published;
- 153 eBooks; □ 2 music CDs; □ 3 audiobooks.

SVS Press also launched a new website, www.svspress.com, implemented a new inventory and point-of-sale system, launched an audiobook program, and began printing on demand in the UK, AU, and EU, with 63 titles currently available through that program.

With a fresh approach to digital marketing, attractive new book covers, strategic planning, and a rigorous production schedule of new books, SVS Press is on track to deliver over \$1 million in net profit to the Seminary, and to produce tens of thousands of theological texts worldwide, spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ.

SVOTS Faculty (2022-23 Academic Year):

Historically, St Vladimir's Seminary has been known for having “stars” among its faculty. Today, under the leadership of our Academic Dean Dr Alex Tudorie, it can be said that today the Seminary has an “all-star” faculty with outstanding professors in all of the academic disciplines and in all four of our degree programs. This includes initial work toward approval for adding the Ph.D. to our list of approved degrees. Please see the following list of our current faculty members:

Full Time Tenured Faculty

Dr John Barnet, Associate Professor of New Testament
 Dr Peter Bouteneff, Professor of Systematic Theology
 The Rev Dr Bogdan Bucur, Associate Professor of Patristics
 Dr Michael Legaspi, Associate Professor of Old Testament

Full Time Sessional Faculty

The Very Rev. Dr Sergius Halvorsen, Assistant Professor of Homiletics and Rhetoric
 The Very Rev. Dr Chad Hatfield, Professor of Pastoral Theology
 The Rev. Dn Dr Vitaly Permiakov, Assistant Professor of Liturgical Theology
 Dr Harrison Russin, Assistant Professor of Liturgical Music
 Dr Ionut Alexandru Tudorie, Professor of Church History

Part Time Faculty

The Very Rev. Archimandrite Dr Maximos Conostas, Professor of Patristics
The Rev. Dr Varghese Daniel, Assistant Professor of Malankara Studies
Dr Alexander Lingas, Professor of Music
The Very Rev. Dr Alexander Rentel, Assistant Professor of Canon Law
The Rev. Dr Anthony Roeber, Professor of Church History
Dr Rossitza Schroeder, Associate Professor of Art History
The Very Rev. Dr Eric Tosi, Assistant Professor of Pastoral Theology
Dr Matthew Vest, Assistant Professor of Christian Ethics

Doctor of Ministry Faculty

Dr Gregory Abdalah, Assistant Professor of Pastoral Theology
Dr Ryan (Sampson) Nash, Associate Professor of Medicine
The Rev. Dr Gregory Edwards, Assistant Professor of Missiology
Dr Ana Iltis, Professor of Philosophy
Dr John Reynolds, Professor of Philosophy
The Very Rev. Dr Nicholas Solak, Assistant Professor of Pastoral Theology

Instructors of the Practice

The Rev. Nicholas Belcher, Antiochian Liturgics
The Very Rev. Adrian Budica, Clinical Pastoral Education
The Rev. John El Massih, Antiochian Liturgical Music
Dr Albert Rossi, Counseling and Psychological Services

Spiritual Formation:

SVOTS was chosen as the only Orthodox seminary, among 18 ATS-accredited seminaries, to be part of a project focused on the place of “spiritual formation” in seminaries and the impact of formation on “clergy character,” funded by the Templeton Foundation. This has been important for many reasons, but one that is significant is our own internal goal of maintaining a balance of strong academics blended with pastoral and spiritual formation.

Library & OCA Archives:

It should be noted that during the pandemic the Fr Georges Florovsky Library underwent a long overdue upgrade costing just over \$220,000. In addition, changes have been made to accommodate the acquisition of the OCA archives.

IN CLOSING:

I will close this report by acknowledging the SVOTS Board of Trustees decision that our current location and facilities no longer meet our needs. To preserve our great legacy, we are now engaged in a process of due diligence and careful planning. There is no road map for us to follow. Our history is full of past attempts at relocation and merger talks. (See: On Christian Leadership: The Letters of Alexander Schmemmann and Georges Florovsky (1947-1955), by Paul L. Gavrilyuk, SVS Press). As noted in the introduction to the report, we are now “compelled” to act and not to ignore the signs of the times.

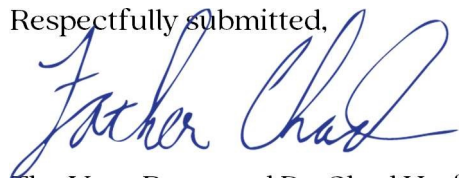
And this is not simply a “relocation.” This is about expansion. We’ve simply outgrown our space, and the OCA, the Orthodox Church as a whole, and the world need more from St Vladimir’s: more clergy, more teachers, more choir directors, more writers, more chaplains, and so many other vocations; more Orthodox publications and resources; more academic programs; options for undergraduate and even K–12 education for Orthodox children on campus; multiple chapels to serve the unique liturgical training needs of different jurisdictions in SVOTS’ incredibly diverse, pan- and inter-Orthodox student body.

These things are simply not possible if we do nothing or just patch things up here and there, though we diligently explored that very option. A modern and expanded campus will give us more financial flexibility to build on the already immense legacy of St Vladimir’s Seminary, and transform it into something even more valuable for Orthodoxy in the twenty-first century.”

As we move forward we are using every resource available to assist us, and we have taken Sirach 2:1-6 as our Scriptural inspiration:

My Son, if you aspire to be a servant of the Lord, prepare yourself for testing. Set a straight course, be resolute, and do not lose your head in time of disaster. Hold fast to him, never desert him, if you would end your days in prosperity. Bear every hardship that is sent you; be patient under humiliation, whatever the cost. For gold is assayed by fire, and the Lord proves men in the furnace of humiliation. Trust him and he will help you; steer a straight course and set your hope on him.

Respectfully submitted,



The Very Reverend Dr. Chad Hatfield,
President, Rector and CEO

Internal Auditor's Report

Internal Auditor's Report

Mandate

The Audit Committee of the Orthodox Church in America has as its mission to: Audit all accounts of the Orthodox Church in America on a semiannual basis and review the audited accounts of all stavropegial institutions on an annual basis and to report same to the Metropolitan Council.

Membership

Polly Walker, *Chair*, Maha Adranly, *Member*, Matushka Sharon Hubiak, *Member*

Initiatives and Projects Since the 19th All American Council

The primary purpose of the Audit committee is the assessment of the operations within the Chancery proper, as it concerns the accounting and fiscal systems and reports issued to various bodies and committees within the Church.

Having been nominated for positions on the Committee, formally elected by the Metropolitan Council and approved by the Holy Synod of Bishops, the current members of the Committee met several times over the course of a few months via Zoom, due to the ongoing Covid crisis. Our tasks were subdivided between members of the committee.

In short, all areas that we looked at were in good order with some minor concerns and recommendations listed below:

- Suggestion to rename four accounts
- A minor correction was missing from a spreadsheet
- Accounts under the Fixed Assets and Depreciation headings needed to be cleaned up
- Minor issues with the Accounts Receivable section owing to some invoices not having been entered
- Unapplied credits in the Accounts Receivable section
- Research receivables greater than 90 days in arrears
- Minor issues with Accounts Payable owing to bills not being entered
- A small balance left in the Opening Balance Equity account that was used when transferring the books from the old accounting software to QuickBooks
- Some travel expense reimbursements did not include complete name and description detail
- Clarification needed on account name for Distributions – Grants and Endowments

St Catherine's Representation Church in Moscow, Russia's 2020 financials were reviewed. St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary audited financial statements were presented and reviewed for 2020 and St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary audited financial statements for 2019. New Skete

Monastery, Nuns of New Skete and Holy Myrrhbearers Monastery financial reports were reviewed for 2020.

While the statute directs the committee to visit the Chancery on a semi-annual basis, the committee has established a practice of annual visits barring unforeseen and mitigating circumstances such as Covid-19. While we were each able to complete our portions of the audit separately and report back via Zoom, the scenario was less than ideal and ended up taking far longer than we expected due to delays in asking for and obtaining information which would usually be at our fingertips were we at the Chancery. It is our recommendation that all future audits, barring unforeseen and mitigating circumstances, continue to be conducted on-site at the Chancery.

Pension Plan Report

Orthodox Church in America Plan Report for the 20th AAC

Mandate

The Orthodox Church in America Pension Plan (the “Plan”) was established in 1976. The administrative management of the Plan is assigned to the Pension Board, an autonomous executive board. The assets of the Plan are held in the Orthodox Church in America Pension Plan Trust (“Trust”).

The mission of the Pension Board is to provide a dependable retirement vehicle for OCA Clergy and Lay Staff.

The Board and consultants hold regular quarterly meetings and collaborate with intermittent conference calls and special meetings as needed. The Board has met at least twenty-five times since the 19th AAC in July 2018 for both regular and special meetings.

OCA Pension Board Trustees, jointly with key professional investment, legal, actuarial, accounting and auditing providers and the Plan Administrator regularly evaluate Plan provisions and capabilities, with a goal of providing the best benefits possible based upon the expected contributions and earnings.

The OCA Pension Plan is a non-ERISA pension plan that complies with United States Internal Revenue Service (IRS) regulations to meet the requirements for favorable tax status as a “qualified” pension plan. In addition, clergy pension plan members may choose to receive part or all of their benefit payments as income tax free housing allowance. The Pension Board seeks to uphold the parameters of the Plan as defined by the Plan Document and legal controls as defined by the IRS.

Professional Consultants are:

Actuarial Services: Milliman Inc.

Investment Services: Morgan Stanley Wealth Management

Legal Counsel: Semo Law Group

Auditor/Certified Public Accountant: Baker Tilly US, LLP

Membership

The Pension Board is comprised of seven members. Each member also serves as a Trustee of the Trust. The All-American Council elects six members (three clergy and three non-clergy) and the Holy Synod appoints one hierarch as the Episcopal Moderator. The Trustees elect one member to serve as Chairman of the Board. The Board supervises the Pension Office Staff.

Trustees: Synodal Liaison (currently vacant); Fr. Gleb McFatter, Chair; Fr. Matthew Tate; Mr. Barry Gluntz; Fr. John Zdinak; Ms. Mary Ann Bobulsky; Matushka Mary Buletza Breton

OCA Pension Board Staff: Ms. Michael Stieglitz, Administrator

Four Trustee positions are eligible for re-election at this 20th All American Council: Fr. Gleb McFatter; Fr. John Zdinak; Matushka Mary Buletza Breton; Mr. Barry Gluntz

Reflection on the Theme “Becoming Vessels of Grace”

The Orthodox Church in America Pension Plan offers OCA participants the opportunity for a secure financial income in retirement. The Pension Plan is a function of the Brotherhood of priest of the OCA. Each individual may or may not be able to achieve better retirement as an individual, but the Pension Plan acts to take care of the Brotherhood as a whole. We are all vessels to take care of one another.

Initiatives and Projects Since the 18th All American Council

Increased Flexibility: The plan adopted a provision allowing for “In-Service Benefits” for members who are over age 75. The Pension Board has activated a church member and pension member portal called MARC. Through this portal, parish and individual members can access a calculator for their contributions based on salary and housing allowance. The member portal allows plan members to see current benefit projections and submit requests for hypothetical benefit calculations.

Increased Membership: The plan currently has 349 active participating members and 38 inactive members for a total of 387 active/inactive participants. In addition, there are currently 220 monthly benefits recipients. In addition, there are 298 Parishes/Institutions actively participating, the highest count to date. The board continues to work with the Bishops/Designees to assure that newly hired clergy and their parish employers are provided with pension enrollment information at the point of hire. Also, continued effort has been made to enroll clergy and eligible lay employees who are not yet members of the plan. As a reminder,

the AAC has mandated that all qualifying clergy are required to be in the pension plan and that the plan is to be offered to all qualifying lay church workers. Also, the plan stipulates that parishes who currently do not have clergy assigned are still required to contribute the church's share (10%) to the plan.

Increased Funding: The Board has initiated plans to develop additional funding for the plan through the use of bequests and donations. Through these vehicles, individuals/trusts/corporations can benefit the entire population of clergy and lay church workers who are currently enrolled and those who will be enrolled in the future. For example, an OCA member has made the pension plan a beneficiary of an IRA. These funds will increase the funding status of the plan and provide additional stability.

Increased Communication: The Board continues to provide annual reports to the Chancellor/Treasurer gatherings and Board representatives have been available to attend diocesan and deanery meetings when invited. The Administrator regularly visits with the graduating classes at St. Tikhon and St. Vladimir Seminaries.

Improving Investment Performance: As of December 31, 2021, the Plan's investments totaled \$28.31M. The average time-weighted compound return on investments, net of fees for the four year period December 31, 2017- December 31, 2021 was 8.47% versus our benchmark of 8.64% and actuarial assumption of 7%. The average return for the twelve months ending December 31, 2021 was 12.28% versus our benchmark of 10.39%. In January, 2016, the assumptions for terminations and salary scale were updated by our actuarial consultants, Milliman, Inc. which increased the funded status of the plan from 72.7% as of the last All American Council to 77.0% as of January 1, 2022.

Plans, Initiatives and Projects for the Future

The OCA Pension Board, with actuarial and money management support, always conducts all business with a projected 30-40 year outlook. With this in mind, the Board will continue working to encourage a greater level of participation from all clergy and eligible lay staff. An increase in membership will strengthen the current 77.0% funding to project the Plan toward full funding.

The Pension Board will continue to focus on education by providing meaningful retirement information for seminary educators, clergy, and eligible lay staff. In addition, Pension Plan information will be periodically distributed by Bishops/Designees to confirm participation expectations for clergy and parishes.

As you may know, retirement plans are not often available for many vocations in our current economic climate. It is important that the OCA clergy and eligible lay employees understand, appreciate, and utilize the benefit opportunity the Pension Board has developed through the years. We are thankful for the foresight of the original founders

(back in the 70's) who planted the seed that the Plan could build and improve upon to reach the stability it has today and the potential to continue to grow.

Conclusion

With our ever-changing political and economic climate, the Pension Board acts as responsible stewards of the Plan. The Pension Board Trustees take the fiduciary duty to all members very seriously throughout their volunteer tenure of service. The Plan is healthy and strong. We address our Mission to provide a dependable retirement vehicle for the OCA, and with determination, we strive toward our vision of offering participants the opportunity to focus on experiencing the wholeness of the Christian life, having peace of mind while developing a retirement income for their own future and the future of their fellow clergy and church workers.

We encourage you to attend our Pension Plan table here at the hotel to discuss any questions and comments. We anticipate having access to a computer terminal to provide real time current and projected benefits. You may also contact the Pension Board at: Michael S. Stieglitz, Pension Administrator at 516-464-0415 or Michael@ocapension.org.

Proposed Statute Amendment: Pension Plan

PROPOSED STATUTE AMENDMENT Pension Plan

20TH ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL
Baltimore, MD – July 18-22, 2022

Background and Rationale

According to the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America, the Pension Plan “is a retirement plan established and mandated by the Church for all eligible clergy and lay employees. The assets of the Pension Plan constitute property held in trust for beneficiaries of the Pension Plan and are not assets of The Orthodox Church in America (Article III, Section 16).” Further, the Plan is governed by a Board established by the All-American Council, with members elected to either 3- or 6-year terms at each All-American Council. The Board reports on the status of the Plan at each All-American Council triennially and to the Metropolitan Council at least annually.

In late 2020, His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon asked Andrew Smith, Treasurer of the Orthodox Church in America, to help him understand the Pension Plan in light of questions that had arisen from different quarters within the church. Mr. Smith chaired an *ad hoc* committee which, through a good working relationship with the Pension Board and administration, produced a report for His Beatitude in mid-April 2021. His Beatitude subsequently authorized the release of this report to the Holy Synod and the Metropolitan Council. According to the report, the Plan has experienced a decline in funding status in recent years and faces challenges in three primary areas: plan structure, demographics, and investment performance.

The Metropolitan Council discussed this report and its conclusions extensively at a Special Summer 2021 Session and at its regular Fall 2021 Session. It has further authorized the consultation of an outside expert, Cheiron, Inc., to refine its understanding of the Plan and, perhaps more importantly, to help determine what steps are needed to improve the Plan going forward. A report from Cheiron is forthcoming.

The Metropolitan Council appointed a subcommittee among its members to continue reviewing the Pension Plan. This subcommittee has met routinely through late 2021 and early 2022. Among its observations are:

- The communication between the Metropolitan Council and the Pension Board in recent years has been inconsistent, with not all of the relevant information provided at times, and the format for the required information needs to be formalized;
- The Pension Board has, in the past, seen the need to make changes to the Plan (e.g., employer contribution rate increases), but did not propose the changes because of a sense that the changes would be unpalatable to the Metropolitan Council and the Church;
- There are two key categories of constituent of the Pension Plan (identified based on the requirement that they contribute to the Plan): Plan members and Employers;
- There is a sense that plan members and employers feel that they are not represented;
- The Plan and the Pension Board would benefit, particularly as it pertains to making key Plan

- changes, if each key category of constituent had direct representation on the Board; and,
- The macro-economic environment (broadly) and the defined benefit sector (specifically) are experiencing increasing instability. The Pension Plan, through its Board and the Board's relationship to the Metropolitan Council and OCA Administration, needs the foundation and support to act swiftly and adeptly in response to the prevailing environment.

The Pension Subcommittee sees an opportunity to address these challenges by amending the OCA Statute in two key ways:

1. *Codify some of the basic expectations of the Pension Plan's regular reporting to the Metropolitan Council.*

The proposed revised language would require that the Pension Plan report at each semi-annual meeting of the Metropolitan Council and that the reporting would specifically include assets, liabilities, actuarial funding ratio, market value funding ratio, surplus / deficit, and plan participation. It would further grant the Metropolitan Council the authority to ask for additional information. The Pension Board would continue to report triennially to the All-American Council. The Audit Committee would also include the Pension Plan's financial statements in its annual review of OCA finances, in a manner similar to how it currently approaches Stavropegial institutions.

2. *Change the composition of the Pension Board to make for more direct representation of the key constituents, Plan participants and Employers.*

The OCA would hold an election among Pension Plan participants to fill three spots and one alternate on the Pension Board. The Metropolitan, with counsel from the OCA officers, would appoint (with endorsement by the Metropolitan Council and subsequent confirmation by the Holy Synod) persons to fill three spots and one alternate on the Pension Board. The six members (excluding alternates) would appoint a seventh to serve as chair.

These changes would impact the OCA Statute in a number of sections--primarily Article III, Section 16 (Pension Board), but also sections pertaining to the competence of the Holy Synod, the All-American Council, the Metropolitan, and the Metropolitan Council, as well as the role of the Auditing Committee. The changes proposed would strictly preserve the separation of the Pension Plan and the OCA. The Statute would continue to unequivocally state that the assets of the plan are held in trust for the beneficiaries of the Plan and the Pension Board would continue to have its fiduciary duty to those beneficiaries. But, in the view of the Pension Subcommittee, these changes would foster a kind of confidence that comes from direct representation and provide a foundation to adeptly navigate a changing environment.

We anticipate that the findings and conclusions of the aforementioned Cheiron report will help craft future actions that pertain to specific provisions of the Plan; however, as these sorts of changes are outlined in the Plan document and governed by the Pension Board, we think they are not within the scope of the OCA Statute and potential revisions.

Article II, Section 5: Competence of the Holy Synod

Current:

- t. Appointment and supervision of departments, commissions, committees, offices, and boards of the Church;
- u. Confirmation of the Metropolitan's nomination of the Chancellor, Secretary, Treasurer, and other officers of the Church whose competence or service extend beyond the boundaries of a single Diocese;
- v. Determination in consultation with the Metropolitan Council of the dates, location, and theme of the All-American Council.

Proposed:

- t. Appointment and supervision of departments, commissions, committees, offices, and boards of the Church;
- u. Confirmation of the Metropolitan's nomination of the Chancellor, Secretary, Treasurer, and other officers of the Church whose competence or service extend beyond the boundaries of a single Diocese;
- v. Confirmation of the Metropolitan's nomination of Pension Board members;
- w. Determination in consultation with the Metropolitan Council of the dates, location, and theme of the All-American Council.

N.b.: the other items in the current Statute would remain the same in content following new v., but would be given new alphanumeric letters in order.

Proposed Statute Amendment: Chancery Restructuring

PROPOSED STATUTE AMENDMENT

Chancery Restructuring

20TH ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL

Baltimore, MD – July 18-22, 2022

Rationale

This statute amendment is proposed in consideration of the reorganization of the Chancery following the work of the Ad Hoc Restructuring Committee in 2018.

The Chancellor, the Secretary, and the Treasurer serve as corporate officers of the Church, and are nominated for their positions by the Metropolitan, and confirmed by the Holy Synod upon endorsement by the Metropolitan Council. In the reorganized Chancery administration, the Chancellor functions as the Chief of Staff and the other two officers, the Secretary and the Treasurer, report to him.

While the reorganization has been in effect since 2019, the statute does not reflect it. This amendment aims at making the statute reflect but also guard the administrative structure that is already in place.

Current Statute: Article VI, Section 1—Church Officers

The Church Officers shall be a Chancellor, a Treasurer, and a Secretary. Church Officers assist the Metropolitan and the Holy Synod in the administration of the Church and work with the Metropolitan Council in carrying out its particular competence. The Chancellor, Treasurer, and Secretary, together with the Metropolitan, also serve as corporate officers of the Church. Those holding additional positions may be designated as Church Officers by the Holy Synod and the Metropolitan Council, as needed.

The Church Officers work under the direct supervision of the Metropolitan and report to him, the Holy Synod, and to the Metropolitan Council of which they are ex officio members.

Proposed Amendment

The Church Officers shall be a Chancellor, a Treasurer, and a Secretary. Church Officers assist the Metropolitan and the Holy Synod in the administration of the Church and work with the Metropolitan Council in carrying out its particular competence. The Chancellor, Treasurer, and Secretary, together with the Metropolitan, also serve as corporate officers of the Church. Those holding additional positions may be designated as Church Officers by the Holy Synod and the Metropolitan Council, as needed.

The Secretary and the Treasurer work under the direct supervision of the Chancellor and report to him, the Holy Synod, and the Metropolitan Council. The Chancellor works under the direct supervision of the Metropolitan and reports to him, the Holy Synod, and the Metropolitan Council. All three officers are ex officio members of the Metropolitan Council.

Appendix I: Schedule

20th All-American Council

July 18-22, 2022

Baltimore, Maryland

“Becoming Vessels of Grace”

Tentative Schedule

Sunday, July 17

Time	Event	Room
2:00 PM – 10:00 PM	Council Registration	South Foyer
2:00 PM – 10:00 PM	Council Exhibits/Displays	Holiday Ballroom 1-5 and Foyer
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM	Youth Registration	South Foyer
6:00 PM – 8:00 PM	Youth Registration Material Pickup and Parent/Staff Meeting	Paca
8:00 PM	Youth Compline	Paca

Monday, July 18 (Day 1)

Time	Event	Room
8:00 AM – 9:00 AM	Staff, Parent & Youth Meeting	Paca
9:00 AM – 11:35 AM	Youth Session I	Council Youth Area 3 rd Floor
9:00 AM – 10:00 PM	Council Registration	South Foyer
11:30 AM – 5:00 PM	Youth Outing	K-5 Port Discovery Museum 6-12 Maryland Science Center
1:00 PM – 5:00 PM	Diocese of the South Assembly	Peale
1:00 PM – 5:00 PM	Diocese of Eastern PA Gathering	Ruth
1:00 PM – 5:00 PM	Diocese of the Midwest Assembly	Johnson
1:00 PM – 5:00 PM	Diocese of Washington DC Gathering	Latrobe
5:30 PM – 6:30 PM	Holy Synod/Met Council Dinner Meeting	Holiday Ballroom 6
7:00 PM – 9:00 PM	Plenary Session I	Key Ballroom
9:00 PM – 11:00 PM	Metropolitan’s Welcome Reception	Holiday Ballroom 6
10:00 PM	Youth Compline	Paca

Tuesday, July 19 (Day 2)

Time	Event	Room
7:00 AM – 9:00 AM	Hierarchical Divine Liturgy (Diocese of Alaska)	Key Ballroom
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Council Registration	South Foyer
9:00 AM – 10:00 AM	Clergy Wives Breakfast	Holiday Ballroom 6
8:30 AM – 9:30 AM	Staff Meeting, Youth Morning Prayer	Paca
9:30 AM – 11:15 AM	Youth Session II	Council Youth Area 3 rd Floor
10:30 AM - 1:00 PM	Plenary Session II	Key Ballroom
11:30 AM – 5:00 PM	Youth Outing	K-5 Maryland Zoo 6-12 Urban Air Adventure Park
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM	Lunch Recess	
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM	Addiction Seminar	Peale C
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM	Orthodox Church Capital Improvement Fund (OCCIF)	Johnson B
3:00 PM – 4:00 PM	FORUM 1 – Diocese of Alaska Presentation	Key Ballroom
4:00 PM – 5:00 PM	FORUM 2 – Thriving in Ministry Presentation	Key Ballroom
5:30 PM – 6:30 PM	Great Vespers	Key Ballroom
7:00 PM – 8:00 PM	Committee Meetings	Resolutions – Johnson A Nominations – Peale A Statutes – Johnson B
8:00 PM – 10:00 PM	St. Vladimir's Seminary Reception	Holiday Ballroom 6
8:00 PM – 8:30 PM	Youth Compline	3 rd Floor Youth Area
8:30 PM – 10:00 PM	Teen Crash Room	Paca

Wednesday, July 20 (Day 3)

Time	Event	Room
7:00 AM – 9:00 AM	Hierarchical Divine Liturgy (Ethnic Dioceses)	Key Ballroom
8:30 AM – 9:30 AM	Staff Meeting, Youth Morning Prayer	Peale A
9:30 AM – 11:15 AM	Youth Session III	3 rd Floor Youth Area
10:30 AM - 1:00 PM	Plenary Session III	Key Ballroom
11:30 AM – 8:00 PM	Youth Outing	Six Flags
1:00 PM - 3:00 PM	Lunch Recess	
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM	Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry (OCPM) workshop	Johnson A
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM	Clergy Wives Advisory Meeting	Brent
3:00 PM - 4:00 PM	FORUM 3– Diocese of Mexico Presentation	Key Ballroom
4:00 PM - 5:00 PM	FORUM 4 – Panel Discussion on Addiction	Key Ballroom

5:30 PM – 6:30 PM	AAC Panikhida	Key Ballroom
7:00 PM – 8:00 PM	Committee Meetings	Resolutions – Johnson A Nominations – Peale A Statutes – Johnson B
7:00 PM – 10:00 PM	Diocese of the West Assembly	Holiday Ballroom 6
8:00 PM	Youth Compline	Paca
8:30 PM – 10:00 PM	Teen Crash Room	Paca
8:00 PM – 10:00 PM	Private Confessions	Key Ballroom

Thursday, July 21 (Day 4)

Time	Event	Room
7:15 AM – 7:30 AM	Vesting for Liturgy	Pickersgill
7:45 AM – 8:00 AM	Procession	
8:00 AM – 10:30 AM	Hierarchical Liturgy Synodal	Key Ballroom
11:00 AM – 12:00 PM	Holy Synod Brunch with Youth	Holiday Ballroom 6
12:30 PM – 5:30 PM	Youth Outing	National Aquarium or IOCC
1:00 PM – 3:30 PM	Plenary Session IV	
5:30 PM – 8:00 PM	Youth Banquet	Offsite
5:30 PM – 6:30 PM	Reception	South Foyer
6:30 PM – 7:00 PM	Doors Open for Council Grand Banquet	
7:00 PM – 9:30 PM	Council Grand Banquet	Key Ballroom
8:00 PM	Youth Compline	Paca

Friday, July 22 (Day 5)

Time	Event	Room
7:00 AM – 9:00 AM	Hierarchical Divine Liturgy (Diocese of Mexico)	Key Ballroom
9:00 AM – 9:30 AM	Youth Prep for AAC Presentation	Paca
10:30 AM – 1:00 PM	Plenary Session V	Key Ballroom
10:30 AM – 11:15 AM	Youth Council Presentation	Key Ballroom
1:00 PM – 2:00 PM	Holy Synod/Metropolitan Council/ PCC Luncheon	Holiday Ballroom 6

Additional Information *

**Thursday the exhibits/displays close at 7:00 pm*

Sunday-Thursday, July 17-21	Event	Room
9:00 AM – 10:00 PM	Exhibits/Displays	Holiday Ballroom 1-5
9:00 AM – 10:00 PM	St. Tikhon's Museum	Blake

Monday-Friday, July 18-22	Event	Room
6:00 AM – 11:59 PM	Friends of Bill W	Peale C
9:00 AM – 10:00 PM	Secretarial Room	Armistead

Appendix II: Agenda

20th All-American Council

July 18-22, 2022

Baltimore, Maryland

“Becoming Vessels of Grace”

Tentative Agenda

Monday, July 18 (Day 1)

Time	Event	Room
7:00 PM - 9:00 PM	Plenary Session I	Key Ballroom
	<i>Opening Molieben</i>	
	<i>Call to Order</i>	
	<i>Welcome/Organization</i>	
	<i>Local Committee Welcome</i>	
	<i>Metropolitan’s Address</i>	
	<i>Housekeeping</i>	

Tuesday, July 19 (Day 2)

10:30 AM - 1:00 PM	Plenary Session II	Key Ballroom
	<i>Opening Prayer</i>	
	<i>Nominations Procedures</i>	
	<i>Resolutions Procedures</i>	
	<i>Metropolitan’s Report</i>	
	<i>Statute Amendments</i>	
	<i>Chancellor’s Report</i>	
	<i>Secretary’s Report</i>	
	<i>Questions/Discussions</i>	
	<i>Resolutions, time permitting</i>	
	<i>Housekeeping</i>	

Wednesday, July 20 (Day 3)

10:30 AM - 1:00 PM	Plenary Session III	Key Ballroom
	<i>Opening Prayer</i>	
	<i>Treasurer's Report</i>	
	<i>Financial Report</i>	
	<i>Audit Report</i>	
	<i>Funding Resolution</i>	
	<i>Pension Board Report</i>	
	<i>Stavropegial Monasteries Report</i>	
	<i>Questions/Discussions</i>	
	<i>Resolutions, time permitting</i>	
	<i>Housekeeping</i>	

Thursday, July 21 (Day 4)

1:00 PM - 3:30 PM	Plenary Session IV	
	<i>Opening Prayer</i>	
	<i>Election Procedure</i>	
	<i>Elections</i>	
	<i>OCA Departments Report</i>	
	<i>IOCC Address</i>	
	<i>Resolutions</i>	
	<i>St. Vladimir's Seminary Report</i>	
	<i>St. Tikhon's Seminary Report</i>	
	<i>Housekeeping</i>	

Friday, July 22 (Day 5)

10:30 AM – 1:00 PM	Plenary Session V	Key Ballroom
	<i>Opening Prayer</i>	
	<i>Installation of Council</i>	
	<i>Military Chaplains Report</i>	
	<i>Institutional Chaplains Report</i>	
	<i>Other Business</i>	
	<i>Next AAC Straw Poll</i>	
	<i>Final Resolutions</i>	
	<i>Closing Molieben</i>	

Our Apostolic Voyage

PRIMATIAL ADDRESS TO THE TWENTIETH ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL

Baltimore, Maryland

July 18, 2022

His Beatitude, The Most Blessed Tikhon

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of All-America and Canada

Welcome

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Your Eminences and Your Graces, my beloved concelebrants and brothers,
Honored Abbots, Abbesses, and Monastics,
Very Reverend and Reverend Fathers and Clergy Wives,
Distinguished Delegates, Retired Clergy, and Observers,
Beloved Youth, Young Adults, and Esteemed Guests,

On behalf of the archdiocesan council, the parishes, the clergy, and the faithful of the Archdiocese of Washington, I warmly welcome each of you to the city of Baltimore for the convening of the twentieth All-American Council of the Orthodox Church in America. To receive you, the clergy and lay delegates of the 14 dioceses which cover the three countries of this continent, Canada, Mexico, and the United States, many individuals have faithfully labored over the past two years or more. We will have occasion to recognize them during our time together this week but you should know that a dedicated group has worked tirelessly within the chancery, on the Preconciliar Commission, and on the many subcommittees guided by the two co-chairs of the local committee, Archpriest Theodore Boback and Lisa Mikhalevsky. All of this activity has been overseen by our hard-working Council Manager, Deacon Peter Ilchuk. On behalf of all of them, and as the Archbishop of Washington, I welcome you with joy and am confident that our time this week will be both inspirational and productive.

I also personally welcome you to the canonical territory of my diocese and my primatial see. As of June 2 of this year, I have physically taken up residence within that territory and now call Falls Church, Virginia, my home. This not only places me within the geographic bounds of the Archdiocese of Washington but means that I am within a thirty-minute drive to half of my eleven parishes and missions and, for our present purposes, within 55 minutes of Saint Andrew's Orthodox Church here in Baltimore, where we are gathering this week. You will hear more details about this particular journey, that is, the chancery relocation project, during the coming days. At the same time, all of us have so journeyed to arrive here and so, once again, I welcome you.

Introduction

If we were asked, we could all think of any number of significant reasons for our gathering this week: to hear reports relating to the life of the Church, to discuss proposed resolutions, to debate statute amendments, to enjoy fellowship with old friends and

make new ones, and to celebrate the appointed divine services. On the surface, the reasons for which we gather are no different than the reasons for which any other business or civic organization or family might likewise gather.

Consider, for example, that a number of years ago, my family on my mother's side, the Packard family, whom I introduced in my address to the All-American Council in Atlanta, held a family reunion to commemorate the arrival of our first ancestor to these shores. There was a growing desire for the different branches of the family to get to know each other. So a preliminary meeting was held at Murray Hall in Brockton, Massachusetts, which brought together a good number of Packards. B.W. Packard of South Boston was chosen to head a committee of correspondence and to report at future meetings. Four months later, another meeting was scheduled in West Bridgewater but the weather was stormy, so nothing was done until the next spring, when yet another meeting was planned to be held at the People's Theatre in Brockton. This meeting also was postponed due to inclement weather and a fourth attempt was made by calling a meeting at the Town Hall in West Bridgewater. Finally, the meeting was called to order and a motion was made by Mr. Bradford Kingman to form an association under the name of "Packard Memorial Association" and Dr. Horace Packard was chosen as President, with B. Winslow Packard as correspondence secretary and Rufus E. Packard as Recording Secretary. Further, Bradford Kingman and B.W. Packard were chosen as a Committee on Resolutions and Articles of Association. In addition, a large Committee of Arrangements was also elected from among those gathered.

It was decided that a family gathering should be held on August 18th, the date on which Samuel Packard arrived with his wife and daughter to Hingham, Massachusetts. Prior to that, the Resolutions and Articles of Association were adopted and the design for a family seal was accepted. In addition, a Literary Committee and Reception Committee were formed to begin planning for the family gathering. The location of the event was explored, with the original proposal that it be held on the old homestead grounds in West Bridgewater. But on account of the limited accommodations for those coming from a distance, it was deemed advisable to hold it in Brockton. Letters of invitation were sent out and, on the appointed day, parties began to arrive on the evening before and the hotels of the city were soon filled with Packards from every point of the compass.

At last, after a meal, everyone gathered for the program which included speeches from various dignitaries, stories from family members, and poetry readings.

Though this sounds like the logistics of one of our contemporary gatherings, complete with all the protocols and planning involved in such endeavors—and even the

delays—this gathering, in fact, was held 134 years ago, on August 18, 1888, in honor of the 250th anniversary of Samuel Packard's arrival in America in 1638. I mention this in part to remind us that our life today may not be that far removed from the life of our ancestors, wherever they may have hailed from and however much we may know, or not, about their history. I also take advantage of this bit of family lore to share a few words from the speech that Professor Silas Packard addressed to the gathered Packard family near a century and a half ago. He said:

This is the question that I want to leave for the young Packards to answer – these young men and young women into whose faces I now look: What will you do to make lasting and significant this family name in which we all have such just pride? On the tenth of August, 1638, Samuel Packard began the history of the family in this country. On the 10th of August, 1888, was inaugurated the renaissance of that same family, and from this day we are to go forward into a new life, with new purposes, new ambitions, new hopes. And we are to do this, not by resolutions and speeches, not by thinking it over, but by taking hold of the things that come to our hands and utilizing them. Let us accept the wealth that may be ours, and increase it by honest effort, and make it serve the world. Let us take a becoming pride in the family name, and stand by each other in zealously guarding it from bad repute. Let us even perpetuate the name by carefully prepared records which shall be accessible and reliable.

These mannered words from a family gathering in late nineteenth-century New England may at first sound like nothing more than a curiosity from one family's history, but I believe that they can easily be translated to apply to us who gather in the year 2022 here in Baltimore. Each of us is a member of the family that goes by the name of "Christian." And each of us has received great gifts. It is now our turn to take hold of what has been given to us and put it to work, not for personal gain, but in the fulfilling of the apostolic work by which we make ourselves worthy of the name "Christian."

This is the lofty goal that guides us as we travel along whatever path the Lord and his Church call us on our journey towards eternal salvation in the heavenly Kingdom. And one of the surest ways to find that salvation, along with God's grace and mercy, is by taking hold of the things that come to our hands and utilizing them for the life of the world.

This is what distinguishes our gathering this week from all such similar gatherings that might be taking place in similar hotels throughout this continent. Yes, there are similarities in the elaborate plannings committees, the banquets, the speeches, the delays, but this organization, this family, this Assembly, this Body, gathers in the Name

of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ. We gather as Christians, as individuals of varied background, culture, and genealogy who yet share one common bond and seal of fellowship: we all bear the Name of Christ.

There is much more that follows from this reality. From our own life in the Church, which is the life in Christ, we know that bearing the Name of the Lord binds us all together through many ties of faith and belief, tradition and common experience. But in our present-day society, where the very name “Christian” is maligned, ridiculed, misunderstood, or simply ignored, it is good for us to find the appropriate boldness and confidence to act, to speak, and to live as genuine Christians in a manner that will strengthen our own communities and offer an honorable witness of what it means to bear the Name of the Savior.

To offer an honorable witness of what it means to bear the Name, we must become worthy bearers of that Name: not worthy on our account, but worthy because of the power of Christ whose Name we bear within. This is the chosen theme for this, the twentieth, All-American Council, “Becoming Vessels of Grace.” On the one hand, in the most obvious sense, this theme reflects the concept of vocation: one’s calling by God to some sacred task or ministry. But in a deeper sense, it is a theme that seeks to address a fundamental question we should all have: what does it mean to bear the Name of Jesus Christ? What does it mean to be a Christian? What we do in life is, of course, important and in many ways defines us. But underlying our external activity, our external work, is the inner reality of who we are as persons, that is, our vocation. And the fullest expression of our personhood is grounded and completed in the divine-human person of the God-man, Our Lord Jesus Christ. As such, as we consider what it means to be a Christian, and thus how to give a good witness to the Name we bear, we must begin by considering the person of Our Lord.

So, as we set the stage for this 20th All-American Council of the Orthodox Church in America, I would like to begin with the example of him in whose Name we gather. To borrow a phrase from St. John Climacus, “When speaking to the servants of God, it is always good to begin with our God and King himself” (*Ladder*, step 1).

Considering the example of Our Lord, I would like to speak in particular of his life of travel. During his sojourn on this earth, the Lord was always traveling. He was always moving from one place to another. As an infant, he sojourned in Bethlehem of Judah and the distant land of Egypt before making his childhood home in Nazareth. As an adult, he traveled back and forth from Jerusalem. He went about in Galilee and Judea. He passed through the coasts of Tyre and Sidon and Decapolis. He was always a step ahead of the

crowds—both those who wanted to adore him and those that who wanted to throw him off of a cliff.

Likewise, our own life is one of movement. We may feel that such motion is a consequence of our modern conditions, according to which communication is constant, information is ubiquitous, and life itself can seem more and more “virtual.” But, in many ways, such a life is not that far removed from the life of constant change and travel lived by Our Lord. This element of his life offers us a model for how to live our lives. We should not expect or hope for a static existence in this world; according to the Fathers, this is the world of becoming. Our rest is beyond this world. In this world, the Lord was always moving, and likewise, his Church has been moving.

Thus, as we gather in council to deliberate in common and make decisions concerning our present and future witness to the saving Name of Jesus, we must begin with considering the voyage our Church has undertaken to this point. To become vessels of grace means that we bear the Name of Jesus Christ within ourselves, but vessel has two meanings: it can mean simply a container. But a vessel can also mean a ship—something meant for a journey. Thus we carry the Name of Christ as a treasure inside, but we also carry that Name forward, through space and time, until the final consummation of all things. This is the voyage of each individual Christian, and the apostolic voyage of our Church as a whole. On this note, I would like to recall something about the voyage of the Orthodox Church in America that has brought us to this point.

Voyage

The year 2020 marked the 50th anniversary of two significant events: the glorification of the venerable Herman of Alaska and the granting of autocephaly to the Orthodox Church in America. The difficulties of the global health crisis brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic prevented us from properly celebrating those historic events but their significance should not be forgotten. Those anniversaries mark not merely the passage of 50 years of chronological time since 1970 but rather represent what we might call nautical mileposts on the voyage of the North American Mission through the previous 225 years of spiritual growth and ecclesiastical expansion. The prayers and labors of St. Herman and his monastic brothers prepared the ground for the ascetical and liturgical life on this continent, and their missionary zeal inspired the many other laborers for Christ, down to our own times, who would follow after them as preachers, hearers, and doers of the Gospel. Collectively, over these many years, they forged what would eventually become the local autocephalous Orthodox Church in America. Our apostolic voyage on this land thus began with the prayers and labors of holy men and women, prayers and labors which took root in the hearts of new generations of

Orthodox Christians, both those from traditionally Orthodox lands and those who would convert to our holy faith. This spiritual growth in the hearts of human beings also found physical expression in the planting of missions, the building of Churches, and the founding of monasteries and seminaries. All of this spiritual growth and physical expansion, taken together, can be considered the patrimony of the Church, that is, the heritage that we have received from our predecessors, which we are now called to preserve and hand down to our children and their children.

One word for this process of receiving, assimilating, and then handing down and passing onto future generations is tradition; another word is stewardship. While we often think of stewardship as referring narrowly to financial matters, I have elsewhere proposed that it might be better understood as the “application of our spiritual life to the realities of the fallen world.” In a very concrete way, these structures and buildings, our monasteries, our seminaries, our parishes and missions, all form the physical receptacles of the patrimony of our Church, the spaces within which Christian charity, Orthodox prayers, inspiring worship, and deep repentance come to life. We are all called to be good stewards of both the spiritual and the physical gifts because God has entrusted them to our care and has given us the sacred task of safeguarding all these treasures.

In her two-thousand-year history, the Church has faced many challenges such as persecution, war, theological controversy, disease, and natural disaster. By the grace of God, though each challenge often brought pain and suffering, the fabric of the Church has never been torn or sundered. The lives, teachings, and writings of the martyrs, confessors, and ascetics offer clear evidence of the triumph of life over death, of healing over illness, and of joy over sorrow. Their witness allows us to look confidently back on our history with gratitude, a disposition of the heart which, as the holy fathers note, draws to it an abundance of God’s grace.

The Orthodox Church in America has faced her share of similar challenges over the last 225 years, starting with the challenges that faced the early missionaries in Alaska, the local impact of the Russian Revolution, and successive waves of immigration due to geopolitical upheavals in Eastern Europe and the Middle East. By the grace of God and through the labors and efforts of many, our Church has, slowly but confidently, maintained her course, addressed each successive challenge. Amid all of this, we hope that we are growing ever more mindful of our need to rely on God in all things. It is quite remarkable to observe the amazing journey of our Church from a struggling missionary outpost in Russian Alaska, to an expanding mission on the West Coast, to a multi-ethnic and continent-wide Metropolia striving to establish the foundations for what would eventually become a local autocephalous Church. Each step of that journey has provided

concrete opportunities to plant and nurture the seeds of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church in these lands, opportunities for which we should always give thanks to God.

Our gratitude is offered above all to the Holy Spirit who has guided and strengthened the clergy, monastic, and faithful of our Church as they faced the challenges of their times. It is also offered to such figures as St. Herman and St. Innocent, St. Tikhon and St. Alexander Hotovitsky, along with all the other well-known and lesser-known saints of our lands, who are themselves a testimony to the guidance of the same Comforter that Christ promised would abide with his disciples and apostles forever (Jn. 14:16). Now is the time for us to draw courage and inspiration from their examples and to carry forward their apostolic labors by maintaining a spirit of gratitude and exercising genuine care for the health, stability, and growth of our Church and her people. With gratitude for all that is past in our hearts, we now must cultivate the virtues of watchfulness, discernment, and stewardship, and it is to these virtues that I now turn, as we move from the past to the present and future.

Stewardship

Our bountiful God gives us everything as a gift and it is up to us to exercise the proper discernment in using the gifts or talents that he bestows on us. These gifts are many and great, from the very breath which sustains our human existence to the magnificent universe he created out of nothing, from the very life of his Son who was offered up in sacrifice for us to the eternal life of incorruption which Christ grants us by his glorious resurrection. All of this is contained in another gift which he gives to us: the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. With respect to this great gift, we also have a duty to discern the right ways to exercise good stewardship.

To acquire this discernment is not an easy task. We must rely on the experience of those who have travelled the way before us, not only the saints who illumined our lands, but the entire apostolic, canonical, and patristic tradition of the Orthodox Church. We must also learn to rely on each other as we labor together in this process of discernment: to listen to one another, to trust one another, and to be willing to work together for the accomplishment of the apostolic work that lies ahead of us. This also means discerning our vocation as Christians who form the Body of the Church.

This brings us back to “Becoming Vessels of Grace,” and to our vocation. Our fundamental vocation is grounded in the reliance of our personhood on the divine-human personhood of Our Lord: our fundamental vocation is the name “Christian.” But this common vocation is expressed in each of our lives in many different ways, according

to the many blessings and gifts that flow from the Source of all good things and which are given to all of us according to the need of each and the need of all.

Thus, there are a multitude of avenues on which we can exercise our vocation and our stewardship. Each of these has a personal component: “What is my vocation?” and “How should I exercise good stewardship?” But each of these also has a communal component: “What is our vocation as a family, as a parish or mission, as a deanery or diocese, as the Orthodox Church in America?” The All-American Council is one forum where we, as the Church gathered together, can undertake the process of discernment that I am speaking of. But we need to undertake this process in every aspect of our Christian life, exercising discernment individually and collectively while never losing sight of the Father’s love for all of us.

A few months ago, on October 20th and 21st of last year, I convened a special joint meeting of the leadership of the Orthodox Church in America to consider concrete ways we might maintain the vision as we move towards the All-American Council. The task at hand was not only to prepare for the Council but to look beyond, to the next decades of our Church life. This gathering, involving the participation of the members of the Holy Synod, the Metropolitan Council, the chancellors of the dioceses, and select leaders of our monastic and theological institutions, was a microcosm of the collaborative work that is required of all of us in charting the course.

The fundamental question I posed was the following: Jesus Christ first loved us: how now shall we love in return? (1 Jn. 4:19). Thus, when we ask ourselves how to carry forward our vision for the Church, how to turn theory into action, we are also probing the question of our vocation: as leaders in the Church, as Christians, and thus, fundamentally, as human beings. Today, I invite all of you to engage in this process, that is, to continue moving from vision to practice through our collective reflection on the theme of vocation, which takes centerstage this week and which should remain a major concern for our future.

Patrimony, stewardship, discernment, vocation: these themes take us beyond our present moment, and into the future, both the temporal future—the coming times and seasons, until Christ comes again in glory—and also the eternal reward promised to all good and faithful servants of God. It is with both our temporal future and our eternal destiny in mind that I would like to devote the third part of my address to some of the changes now underway in the life of Church and previewing the work of this week’s council. In doing so, I would like to underscore how each step of our work, today and in future, must always be a new beginning.

Beginning

In undertaking any voyage, the launch is only the first step. As the voyage progresses, there is always a need for both perseverance and renewal, for fresh efforts and new exertions. The apostles took the first steps on their apostolic journey when they responded to the Lord's words: "Come, follow me," (Mt. 4:19) but they were continually recommitting themselves to their calling. In our own lives, and especially in our spiritual lives, we often do the same: launching with zeal, falling into temptation, repenting and picking ourselves up again. We do this not because we are gluttons for punishment but because we have voluntarily set sail upon this voyage which leads to salvation and because we place our trust and our hope in the helmsman, Jesus Christ. It is he who provides us with the grace and courage to continue, as the prophet says: "Now I have made a beginning. This is the change that is wrought by the hand of the Most High."

Each of us has been appointed his own journey, starting at a different place and traveling at different speeds, so we must individually be willing to allow ourselves to move at the pace that is beneficial for ourselves. At the same time, when we gather together to discern how to move forward collectively, we must be mindful of the uniqueness of each person even as we try to arrive at solutions that are helpful for all.

At every stage of our voyage, as individuals and as the Church, it is helpful to avoid extremes: on the one hand, rushing into things with an unrealistic expectation of solving every challenge quickly and, on the other hand, becoming paralyzed by the magnitude and complexity of those challenges. If all of us, individually and collectively, are able to begin with confidence and persevere with hope, I am confident that the Lord will bless us abundantly in our apostolic travels.

On our apostolic voyage, it is indisputably our Lord Jesus Christ who is the pilot and captain of the ship of the holy Church. At the same time, each of us who is aboard that ship, whether sailor or passenger, contributes to the progress of the journey by offering our talents and service to the Lord and to our fellow travelers. We accomplish this in a multitude of ways, striving to maintain a spirit of gratitude for what we have inherited and discerning wisely how to tackle the challenges ahead of us. These challenges are many: loss of faith and trust in divine realities, economic hardship, cultural unrest, and global tensions, among many others. We may rightly wonder how to accomplish what our saintly predecessors accomplished so remarkably: bringing the Orthodox faith from distant lands, planting monasteries, establishing seminaries, building parishes, and missions, and spreading the Orthodox Christian faith throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

In my nearly ten years as primate of the Orthodox Church in America, I have wondered about all of these things. I have wrestled with the question of how best to exercise my on primatial ministry in overseeing my canonical and statutory responsibility to care for the internal and external life of the Church. Likewise, it can be daunting to behold the multitude of challenges that face our dioceses, our parishes, our institutions, and each of us as individual Christians: changing parish demographics, the need to nurture clerical and monastic vocations, difficulties facing theological education, finding ways to engage our youth, maintaining the unity of the Church while preserving the identity of each diocese, and forging good relations with our sister Orthodox Churches throughout the world.

It is not always easy to shoulder these tasks but I am grateful that I have been able to rely, first of all, on the mercy of Almighty God, worshipped in Trinity, and our entire apostolic tradition, together with the example and prayers of the saints. Additionally, I have also been able to depend on my brother bishops, fellow monastics, and all the clergy and faithful who daily assure me of their prayers and support. The knowledge of this support provides me with a solid foundation upon which to exercise my vocation as primate and has encouraged me to persevere in offering my own small contribution to the mission of our Church in North America.

As we pass the threshold of our fiftieth year of existence as an autocephalous Church and our two hundred and twenty-fifth year of presence in North America, it is evident to me that we stand on the brink of another phase of the existence of the Orthodox Church in America.

Without discounting the challenges and problems facing us, and without wishfully hoping for a rosy future, I am convinced that we are now at a point where we need to take bold action and renew our commitment to the life of the Church, not to radically transform the administration of the Church, but give it the room to operate and fulfill its ministry in the most fruitful way.

Part of this, of course, is the ongoing relocation of the Chancery from Long Island to Washington, D.C. The geographic location of the Chancery offices and operations was historically determined by the changing realities of Church life, realities which shifted as the Church expanded from Alaska, to the West coast of the United States, and then eastward. Now, we are living in a context where we also have seen expansion to the north (Canada) and the south (the Diocese of the South and Mexico). Each historic physical location of the central administration remains as a concrete testimony to our historical trajectory. In this process, the leadership of the Church has never shied away from

contemplating a change in geographic location in order to better reflect and serve the changing administrative and pastoral realities and needs of the Church.

It is just these realities and needs that have prompted our relocation of the offices of the Chancery and the residence of the primate of the Orthodox Church in America to the greater Washington, D.C., area. Now, the Metropolitan, in accord with our canons and statutes, resides in his diocese, and the office that supports him on a daily basis is in the process of moving there with him. Furthermore, the greater Washington, D.C., area provides one of the most effective locations for preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the canonical territory of our Church and for reaching out to the wider North American community.

By decision of the Holy Synod, the primatial see of the Orthodox Church in America was transferred from New York to Washington, D.C., in 1981. However, neither the residence of the Metropolitan nor the chancery offices were relocated at that time. It is time to regularize this canonical anomaly and provide for the Metropolitan, who bears the title of Archbishop of Washington, to reside physically in his see and for the administrative offices which he oversees to be likewise located within that same region. The physical move of my residence and the chancery offices will allow for a more robust support system for me and, conversely, allow me to be more actively and pastorally present in my own diocese. Certainly, my responsibilities to the broader Church as Primate will always make it difficult to minister adequately to my local flock. But, until now, my primatial responsibilities have been hindered by my isolation from my flock. This carefully thought-out relocation is one concrete measure that will begin to remedy that situation and that will be spiritually, emotionally, and physically beneficial for the Orthodox Church in America. That said, I know that our monastics, clergy, and faithful will not accept anything less than a glorious, honorable, and dignified solution to every aspect of this transition, which it is my intention to pursue.

But this move of my residence and the chancery operations is only one change that we face today. We will face questions related to the Pension Plan, and we will consider what actions that we might take to ensure the long-term wellbeing of current participants and retirees as well as future clergy and employees of the Orthodox Church in America. We must confront with hope the situation of the Diocese of Alaska, our oldest diocese, the Northern Holy Land of our local Church. We must recall the special situation of our newest diocese, that of Mexico. Measures both broad and specific regarding the current and future health and stability of our central administration, parishes, dioceses, seminaries, and other institutions will be part of our discussions, both

formal and informal, over the coming days. Clergy health, both mental and physical, as well as professionalization and support for all church workers, is yet another concern.

But sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof, as the Our Lord teaches us (Matt. 6:34). Now is not the time for a detailed preview of each aspect of the upcoming council or for a preliminary outline of all of our deliberations. It is certainly not the time to vainly list the troubles and worries that face us. As I stated previously, it is important for us to understand our high calling, the great and sacred nature of the tasks before us, and the hazards and opportunities of our moment. And just as important, as I briefly indicated in this talk's first section, is for us to understand that our troubles are not unique. We face changes and challenges, and our world is in constant motion, but this was the world in which Our Lord worked and traveled; this is the world in which the Church Militant has always sojourned. And as comforting as this is, we have an even greater hope than an aphoristic sigh of "twas ever thus": we have a hope in the unconquerable power and providence of Jesus Christ himself. It is with a word about this hope that I would like to conclude this evening's address.

Conclusion: Beyond Success and Failure

I began my address this evening with the present council's theme, becoming vessels of grace. I spoke of us becoming worthy vessels of the Name of Christ, of living up to our high calling. This can be inspiring, but it can also contain the seeds of discouragement. After all, what if our efforts don't turn out as we wish? What if our solutions to problems don't work as we planned? What if we seem to find ourselves in even more difficult circumstances in one or five or ten years? Have we failed as stewards of our patrimony? Are we unworthy vessels of the grace of God?

I believe the answer to these questions is no. If we set our standards for success in worldly terms—growth in numbers, financial stability, and material prosperity—then perhaps we might find ourselves supposedly failing by those same standards. But God's standards are not numbers and property, but faith, hope, and love.

As long as we persevere with love in our calling, exercise humble stewardship with faith in the good Provider of all, and seek with hope and good conscience to fulfill our vocation in Christ, then no matter what becomes of our plans and projects on earth, we will nevertheless succeed by the most important measures, the true measures of discipleship. This is the message of the beautiful spiritual letter attributed to St. Seraphim of Vyritsa, the little treatise called "This Was from Me": whatever difficulties and trials, successes and failures, circumstances and changes we may encounter, we can be sure that everything comes to us for our salvation from the hand of the loving God. The only proper response to this boundless and mysterious generosity is humble-minded

endurance and self-offering, leaving all the rest to the Author of our creation and salvation.

To this end, let me end with one small episode from the Alphabetical Collection of the Sayings of the Fathers. In his one saying that comes down to us in this collection, we hear this of Abba Ischyryon:

The holy fathers were making predictions about the last generation. They said, 'What have we ourselves done?' One of them, the great Abba Ischyryon, replied: 'We ourselves have fulfilled the commandments of God.' The others replied, 'And those who come after us, what will they do?' He said, 'They will struggle to achieve half our works.' They said, and to those who come after them, what will happen?' He said, 'The men of that generation will not accomplish any works at all and temptation will come upon them; and those who will be approved in that day will be greater than either us or our fathers.'

I cannot say whether we have reached those last generations predicted by Abba Ischyryon or not. But I do know that as long as we work faithfully, humbly, cheerfully, and sincerely at the tasks set before us, giving all glory to the Name of Jesus Christ, then we can leave everything else up to the loving providence and goodwill of the Lord who rules all things. Ours is the portion of unworthy servants, merely to do what is asked of us, with our only hope and dignity and worthiness being that of the One whom we serve: Jesus Christ, our true God and Savior, together with his holy and heavenly Father and the all-good and life-giving Spirit, the Comforter, one God in Trinity, glorified throughout all time and eternity.

Once again, I welcome all of you to the Twentieth All-American Council. I look forward to our common work for the upbuilding of the Church, the stewardship of our patrimony, and the perfection of our vocations, so that, regardless of what the future may bring, all of us may be found to be worthy vessels of grace in the kingdom that knows no end.

For a final time, welcome, and may God bless us all.

Appendix IV: Statement on same-sex relationships and sexual identity

Statement on same-sex relationships and sexual identity

Fourth Plenary Session
20th All-American Council
Baltimore, MD
July 21, 2022

There was a resolution proposed to affirm the Church's stance on issues of same-sex relationships and sexual identity. This matter, however, falls outside the competence of the All-American Council, since, in the words of the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America, "All matters involving doctrine, canonical order, morals, and liturgical practice" are within the competence and jurisdiction of the Holy Synod. Nonetheless, meeting under the presidency of His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon, the Holy Synod has issued the following statement:

The Orthodox Church teaches that the union between a man and a woman in marriage reflects the union between Christ and His Church (Eph. 5). As such, marriage is, by this reflection, monogamous and heterosexual. Within this marriage, sexual relations between a husband and wife are an expression of their love that has been blessed by God. Such is God's plan for male and female, created in his image and likeness, from the beginning, and such remains his plan for all time. Any other form of sexual expression is by its nature disordered, and cannot be blessed by the Church in any way, whether directly or indirectly.

That said, the Holy Synod of Bishops expresses its pastoral concern and paternal love for all who desire to come to Christ and who struggle with their passions, temptations, and besetting sins, whatever those might be. The Church is a hospital for the sick; Our Lord has come as a physician to heal those who are ailing. Imitating our Savior, who stretched his arms wide on the Cross, we welcome with open arms all who desire the life of repentance in Christ.

Over the course of recent years, His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon and the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America have made numerous pronouncements affirming the Orthodox Christian teaching on marriage and sexuality. Metropolitan Tikhon, at the 18th All-American Council in Atlanta, Georgia, on July 20, 2015, in his opening address, stated that:

“... the Orthodox Church must continue to proclaim what she has always taught: that marriage is the union between one man and one woman and the Orthodox Church in America can in no way deviate from this teaching...”

Among the Holy Synod’s affirmations of the same teaching are the “Synodal Affirmations on Marriage, Family, Sexuality, and the Sanctity of Life,” from the 10th All-American Council, Miami, Florida, taking place from July 26-31, 1992; the “Synodal Reaffirmation of the SCOBA statement titled ‘On the Moral Crisis in our Nation,’” issued May 17, 2004; and the synodal “Statement concerning the June 26 US Supreme Court decision,” issued June 28, 2015.

Therefore, in accord with the timeless plan of God our Creator, the unchanging teaching of Christ the Savior announced through his holy apostles and their successors, and the consistent witness of the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America, the Holy Synod affirms what the Scriptures clearly and plainly proclaim and the holy fathers unerringly confess, namely: that God made human beings in two sexes, male and female, in his own image, and that chaste and pure sexual relationships are reserved to one man and one woman in the bond of marriage.

As such, we affirm that sexual relationships are blessed only within the context of a marriage between one man and one woman. Motivated by love and out of sincere care for souls, we call those who suffer from the passion of same-sex attraction to a life of steadfast chastity and repentance, the same life of chastity and repentance to which all mankind is called in Christ.

We call upon all clergy, theologians, teachers, and lay persons within the Orthodox Church in America never to contradict these teachings by preaching or teaching against the Church’s clear moral position; by publishing books, magazines, and articles which do the same; or producing or publishing similar content online. We reject any attempt to create a theological framework which would normalize same-sex erotic relationships or distort humanity’s God-given sexual identity. The holy apostle Paul writes that such teachings will “increase to more ungodliness,” and that such a “message will spread like gangrene” (2 Tim 2:16-17), misleading the faithful and inquirers seeking the truth.

Any clergy, theologian, teacher, or lay person who contravenes our directive thus undermines the authority of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America by disregarding the Holy Synod’s consistent and unwavering teaching on these matters. We call on any such persons to cease their disruptive activities, which threaten the peace and tranquility of the Orthodox Church in America, cause scandal and uncertainty, and tempt those who struggle against their disordered passions to stumble. Consequently, those who teach these errors become participants in the sin of those whom they have tempted or whom they have failed to correct, and thus should seek remission of this sin in

the mystery of holy confession. Those who refuse correction open themselves to ecclesiastical discipline.

Thus, we, the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America, conclude by once again affirming that all clergy, theologians, teachers, and lay persons of the Orthodox Church in America should teach nothing other than the fullness of the Orthodox faith, which is the fullness of the saving truth.

We remind our faithful and clergy that every person of goodwill is welcome to visit our parishes. However, reception into the Church, and continued communion in Christ at the sacred Chalice, is reserved for those who strive to live a life of repentance and humility in light of these God-given truths, conforming themselves to the commandments of God as the only path of salvation in Christ. All of us are sinners, but it is for precisely this reason that Our Lord Jesus Christ calls us to “Repent and believe in the Gospel, for the kingdom of God is at hand” (Mk. 1:15).

Appendix V: Approved Resolutions

Resolution on Diocese of Alaska

Whereas Alaska is the cradle of Orthodoxy in America:

Be it resolved that the 20th AAC asks the Holy Synod of Bishops to designate annually the Sunday closest to the December feast of St. Herman, for a free-will collection from each parish in the Orthodox Church in America to support the Diocese of Alaska Clergy Endowment.

Resolution on Ukraine

The 20th All-American Council:

- Expresses support for the statements by His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon and the Holy Synod condemning the aggression against Ukraine;
- Expresses support for His Beatitude Metropolitan Onuphry of Kyiv and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church;
- Condemns the attacks upon parishes, monasteries, and temples whether by military action, seizure by other religious groups, or pressure and interference by civil authorities or occupying forces; and
- Remembers with love the visit of His Beatitude Metropolitan Onuphry to the 18th All-American Council in Atlanta.

Resolution on Pension Plan

WHEREAS the delegates to the 20th All American Council (AAC) desire to see the Metropolitan Council and the Pension Board work in Christian harmony;

WHEREAS the Pension Board describes their desire to “provide meaningful retirement information for seminary educators, clergy, and eligible lay staff” (Pension Office Report to the 20th AAC);

WHEREAS the Metropolitan Council, in the interest of full accountability and transparency, and pursuant to Article V Section 7 of the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America, requires complete, accurate, and up-to-date information on a regular and periodic basis;

THEREFORE, pursuant to Article III Section 4 (e) of the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America, be it resolved by the 20th All American Council that:

1. A member of the Pension Board should appear at each regular Metropolitan Council session to report on the condition, activities and status of the Pension Plan and answer questions regarding it;

2. The Pension Board should provide to the Metropolitan Council at least semi-annually, and in advance of the regularly scheduled session of the Metropolitan Council, all relevant current financial details, including, but not limited to, assets, liabilities, market value funding ratio, actuarial value funding ratio, surplus/deficit, plan participation, plan performance in comparison with the assumed plan projections, trend graphs for terminal and operational funding, and such other relevant information as requested by the Metropolitan Council;
3. The Metropolitan Council should designate a liaison and provide that name to the Pension Board. The liaison should be invited to attend each meeting of the Pension Board to receive information about the Pension Plan and to convey concerns from the Metropolitan Council.
4. The Metropolitan Council and the Pension Board are expected to work together, having regular collaborative sessions to ensure Pension Plan participants and employers can have confidence that their best interests are being served;
5. Once the Pension Board reports have been accepted by the Metropolitan Council, they should be included in the Metropolitan Council minutes and be posted accordingly. The Pension Board should post the accepted report on the Pension Board website as well.
6. The Pension Board should provide clearly formulated and transparent reports to all plan participants no less than once every six months.
7. That professional third party benefit plan administrative training should be provided to the Metropolitan Council and the Pension Board and the Officers of the church