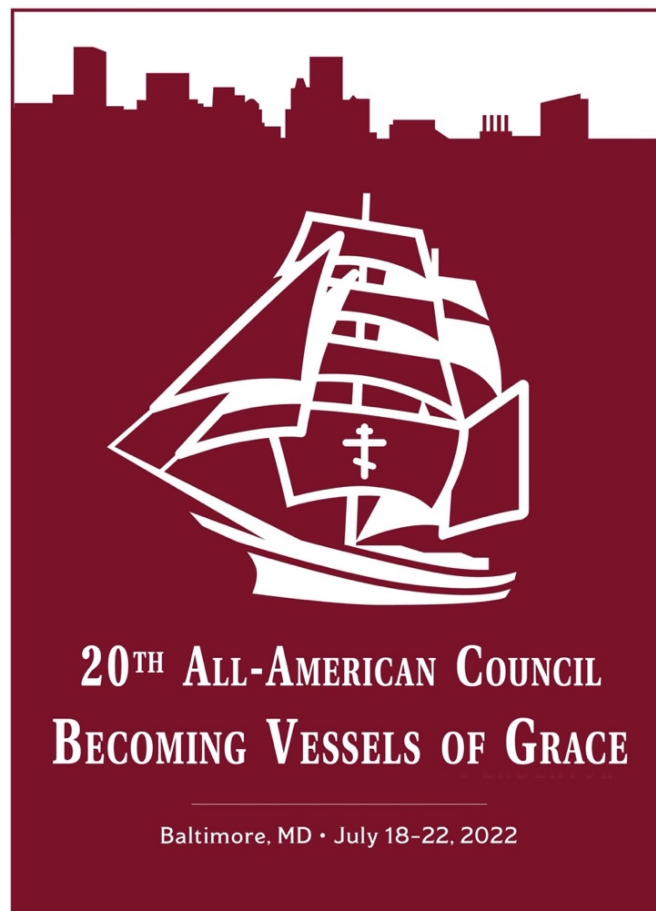


# Reports of the Departments, Offices, Boards, and Institutions of the Orthodox Church in America

20<sup>th</sup> All-American Council  
Baltimore, MD – July 18-22, 2022



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According to Article III, Section 5.i of the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America, this document contains the reports of the Departments, Offices, Boards, and Institutions of the Officers of the Church provided in writing at least thirty days prior to the date set for the convening of the council.

Only some of these reports will be presented orally at the Council in Baltimore. Questions and comments on these reports can, however, be made during the Plenary Sessions.

### **Departments, Boards, Offices**

- Departments
- Board of Theological Education
- Pension Board
- Office of Institutional Chaplains
- Office of Military Chaplains
- Office of History and Archives
- Office of Pastoral Life
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- Sexual Misconduct Policy Advisory Committee (SMPAC)
- Fellowship of Orthodox Christians (FOCA)

### **Institutions**

- Monastery of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk
- Holy Myrrhbearers Monastery
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- St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary
- St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary

### **Internal Auditors' Report**

## **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 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](mailto:tsoroka@oca.org).

Archpriest Thomas Soroka  
Project Manager

## **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 hierarchy'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*



## **Orthodox Church in America Plan Report for the 20<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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: Mr. Michael Stieglitz, Administrator*

*Four Trustee positions are eligible for re-election at this 20<sup>th</sup> 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:Michael@ocapension.org).

## **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](http://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 Orthodox Church in America Military and Veterans Affairs Medical Center Chaplaincies**  
**20<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 79<sup>th</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

20<sup>TH</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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](https://www.stots.edu/news_190923_1)) presenting a talk titled "Autocephaly: Documents and Reflections" ([https://stots.edu/news\\_191018\\_1](https://stots.edu/news_191018_1)) ([https://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/sost/autocephaly\\_and\\_the\\_archives](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 50<sup>th</sup> 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/o-ca-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 20<sup>th</sup> 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



## **I. Office of Pastoral Life**

### **A. Mandate for the Office of Pastoral Life (October 3, 2019)**

The Office of Pastoral Life is under the direction of the primate and the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America. Its purpose is to support and encourage our clergy as they strive to serve the spiritual needs of the flocks entrusted to them. Thriving pastors create thriving parishes. To help nurture our pastors and their ministries, the Office communicates regularly with diocesan hierarchs, develops resources, and organizes supportive workshops, seminars and retreats.

Departmental goals inspired by His Beatitude's Four Pillars include supporting:

1. the healthy spiritual life of our clergy and their families,
2. their sufficient financial support through good stewardship,
3. their relationships with others, and
4. their ability to engage in pastoral ministry.

Aware of the challenges of parish ministry, the Office works to create in every pastor the Psalmist's assurance that he "will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living" (Psalm 27:13).

+Bishop Alexei

+Allgiliyaq Kilirnaq

+Епископ Алексий

*Diocese of Sitka and Alaska*

### **B. Membership:**

Archbishop Paul (memory eternal), Bishop Alexis, Fr. Nicholas Solak, Fr. Gregory Safchuk, Fr. Dennis Rhoades, Fr. David Lowell, Fr. Kirill Sokolov, Fr. Stephen Vernak, Mka. Elaine Rentel (through Dec. 2021), Mka. Jennifer Levine, Shelby Giokas (through Mar. 2022).

### **C. Current Initiatives & Projects Since the 19th AAC:**

Since the 2018 AAC, the Department of Pastoral Life has become the Office of Pastoral Life. Departments are under the whole Synod. Offices are under the Metropolitan and help him with his particular ministries.

#### **1. Thriving in Ministry (TiM) Initiative Program: Report by Fr. Nicholas Solak**

##### **a. Aims and Purposes**

The Orthodox Church in America's (OCA's) Thriving in Ministry program is a clergy and clergy wives peer learning program. The program seeks to be pan-Orthodox by serving parish priests and parish priests' wives from multiple Orthodox jurisdictions with ministries in North America. Our program aims to create and support in-person and virtual peer learning groups organized geographically that allow priests and priest wives to gather quarterly for full day peer learning encounters.

Each in-person peer learning group works with a trained facilitator who leads the peer learning experience. In addition to the quarterly peer learning groups, each group is furnished with funds to hold a fifth session during the course of the year. This 'extraordinary' session is designed to encourage peer learners to break away from formal peer learning and engage with activities that promote deepening fellowship and bonding among members.

Our program aims to provide ongoing training, support, and encouragement to our community of facilitators. The role of confident and competent facilitators is seen as essential to the success of our peer learning program. Facilitators are given resources and support to gain greater mastery of facilitation skills and to take creative agency toward nurturing their peer groups to deeper levels of trust and vulnerability. Our community of facilitators is the very heart of our Thriving in Ministry program.

With peers teaching each other, our program has a specific focus - the 'art and craft' of parish ministry. It inspires theological reflection and broadens understanding of complex pastoral issues arising in parishes throughout our Church. It enables our priests to reflect deeply on their priestly and pastoral identity with others sharing the same vocation. Learning is in real time and immediately ready to be integrated into priestly ministry, parish work, and family life. It allows priests, who are the true experts in the craft of ministry, to learn from each other, sharing the wisdom gathered from many years in active ministry. This is part of why each peer group serves a variety of ages and length of ordained ministry; people in all stages of life have much to offer each other. These outcomes are a large value to the work of the Orthodox Church, but there are additional benefits of peer learning that contribute greatly to the health of our clergy. Our clergy and their wives are building supportive and brotherly/sisterly relationships with one another. These relationships are vital. Burdens are shared and clergy families find they are wrestling with similar temptations, common challenges, and familiar questions. The experience of isolation, so common to many parish priests and spouses, is lessened. This perhaps is one of the greatest values of our TiM Program and the one thing that contributes most to the greater health and wellness of our priests and their families. As the isolation is broken, the joy of ministry rises.

Father Nicholas Solak is the Director of the program. His dedication to peer learning and making “good priests better” is a driving force for the work of the OCA’s Thriving in Ministry Program.

Shelby Giokas is the program secretary. This year she has formed connections with bishops, priests, and lay workers in the Orthodox Church in America. Working within the structure of the Church has taught her how to confidently communicate the needs of the clergy with the hierarchy. She coordinated her first multi-day, off-site event, and looks forward to more in person gatherings. Our board members continue to be dedicated to the needs of the clergy.

Our board consists of Dr. Albert Rossi, Father Sergius Halvorsen, Father Stephen Vernak, and Father Nikodhim Preston (Dr. Randa Anderson joined our board in February 2022). The varied talents of these individuals make for a very balanced and inspiring board. They consistently remind the group to set objectives, prevent mission creep, and serve the clergy without hesitation.

Our facilitators are also an integral part of the leadership team. They are the face of our organization to the clergy and clergy wives participants, so we rely on them to be ambassadors and leaders. They have been taking initiative to suggest changes to our program, adapt where necessary, and give feedback that helps us better serve the clergy. One such leader is Matushka Jennifer Levine. She modified her peer group to serve chaplain clergy wives who are stationed all over the world. Through her work in TiM, she has become more active in the national church. Facilitators like Matushka Jennifer are invaluable to our program.

Our Thriving in Ministry program is actively serving 101 participants: five bishops, 37 priests, and 44 clergy wives. Clergy wives continue to be our fastest growing population. The geographic distance between these participants requires them to gather online; this shows how geographic distance is a contributing factor to their isolation. Sixty nine participants belong to the Orthodox Church in America, the other 32 from six other jurisdictions. Twelve of our members are in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. One of our facilitators, who has also served as a facilitator trainer, organizes peer learning for the Greek Archdiocese. There are nine Antiochian participants, including one bishop. Personal relationships correlating to increased participation is seen within OCA participation rates as well. The Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania has 23 participants, His Eminence, Archbishop Mark, has been an advocate of peer learning for many years. Please see the charts below for a more comprehensive demographic breakdown of participants.

Please see the charts below for a more comprehensive demographic breakdown of participants.

<b>Participants by Role</b>	
Active Facilitators +*	15
Bishops	5
Priests	37
Wives	44
Total Participants	101
Active Groups	19

*\*18 additional trained but inactive facilitators.*

<b>Non-OCA Participants by Jurisdiction</b>	
Antiochian	9
Armenian	1
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America	12
Moscow Patriarchate	2
Serbian	1
Ukrainian	1
Unknown	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>

<b>Participants by OCA Diocese</b>	
Alaska	5 1 wife, 4 priests
Albanian	1 1 priest
Bulgarian	1 1 wife
Canadian	7 1 facilitator, 6 priests
Eastern Pennsylvania	23 2 facilitators*, 13 priests, 10 wives
Midwest	4 1 bishop, 3 wives
New England	6 2 facilitators, 4 wives
New York New Jersey	5 1 facilitator, 1 wife, 3 priests
Romanian	1 1 bishop
South	3 2 wives, 1 Bishop
Stavropegial ((Military) Chaplains)	6 1 facilitator, 5 wives
Washington DC	2 2 facilitators
Western Pennsylvania	5 2 priests, 3 wives
<b>Total OCA Participants 69</b>	

*\*Two facilitators are also peer participants. They are double counted in statistics, single counted in totals.*

## 2. Synaxis Program: Report by Fr. Nicholas Solak

The Synaxis Program - organized by the Office of Pastoral Life – has been hosted by His Grace, Bishop Alexis. Promoting clergy health and well-being is an important goal for the Office of Pastoral Life. Early in 2021, the Metropolitan Council approved funding to sponsor and expand the Synaxis program. This includes using trained clergymen to serve as facilitators for small group breakout rooms at quarterly synaxis gatherings. These gatherings use the model of peer learning and are held through an online platform.

The broad objectives of the program:

- Clergy will find greater resilience in preserving the joy of ministry and leadership during stressful transitions, and share that joy with peers in a community of mutual trust.
- Clergy will utilize confidential spaces where they are able to reflect upon ideas, struggles, and knowledge regarding their ministry.
- Clergy will be prepared and willing to take greater agency in ongoing formation of their priestly ministry and personal spiritual, emotional, and physical health.

In total, the Office of Pastoral Life has hosted six (6) of these quarterly Synaxis Gatherings with participation ranging from forty (40) to seventy (70) parish priests and parish deacons. Each gathering has opened with a brief reflection from a guest Diocesan Hierarch followed by clergy entering breakout rooms of four (4) to seven (7) clergymen. Each breakout room is furnished with a trained facilitator to help guide the peer conversations. At the end of each gathering, a survey is administered to the participants. These survey results have consistently scored high regarding participants value and engagement with Synaxis program. For example, in the December 2021 Synaxis fifty-seven (57) priests and deacons were in attendance. At that Synaxis, a survey item was: Through this Synaxis I have found points of joy in my ministry – 92% of participants strongly agreed or agreed.

In August 2021, the Office began conducting interviews to gather deeper qualitative data about participant reaction to the Synaxis and the Office of Pastoral Life. Care was taken that interviewees were chosen to represent each geographic region of the Orthodox Church in America. While years of ministry were recorded for each participant, this was not a determining factor in their being chosen as an interviewee.

In total, thirty-six (36) clergymen were asked if they would like to be interviewed. Nineteen (19) consented and the interviews were completed. Interviewers completed reports based on a given template, then emailed the reports to Father Nicholas Solak and Shelby Giokas. Shelby compiled the documents, and passed them to Deacon Jacob for data analysis. Deacon Jacob has built a comprehensive presentation about the data and his analysis process. This presentation has been shared with the larger membership of the Office of Pastoral Life, the Department of Clergy Continuing Education, the Metropolitan Council, and Synaxis participants.

### 3. **Clergy Wives Advisory Group (CWAG):** Report by Mka. Jennifer Levine

The Clergy Wives Advisory Group was formed at the request of Bishop Alexis and Metropolitan Tikhon in 2020 to help clergy wives connect, encourage, and support one another in a time when the Covid pandemic was causing severe isolation issues worldwide. In collaboration with Hierarchs and Chancery staff, the effort to collect and update contact information for clergy wives was begun to foster better communication between clergy wives. Once the directory was assembled, more outreach projects were slowly developed.

#### a. CWAG Projects:

- Private, Online Directory: Out of a potential 1,139 clergy wives, 402 have submitted their information for inclusion in a Clergy Wives Directory; 120 of these are clergy widows. The directory form includes email, clergy status, preferred title, first & last name, mailing address, diocese, deanery, parish, city, state, cell phone, home phone, birthdate (month/day), patron saint/names day (Old or New Calendar indicated), husband's first name, husband's clerical rank, a privacy option, and further comments.
- Quarterly Online Zoom Retreats: Five retreats were hosted over 14 months—Dec. 2020, Mar. 2021, July 2021, Oct. 2021, & Feb. 2022. Registration ranged from 51-132, with an average attendance of 53. Guest speakers were recorded so participants unable to attend in person could listen to the links later. Clergy wives from other jurisdictions also attended. Guest speakers received an honorarium.
- Quarterly Online Newsletter: Five newsletters were published over 14 months—Spring (Mar.) 2021, Summer (Aug.) 2021, Fall (Nov.) 2021, Winter (Feb.) 2022, and Spring (May) 2022. Contents include—letters from CWAG, Interviews, Personal Reflections, Recent & Future Events, Small 't' Traditions, Diocesan News, Recipes, Book Reviews, Resource Contact List, etc.
- Diocesan Point-People: Archdiocese of Canada: Matushka Pat Katsilas & Matushka Lena Liabotis; Archdiocese of Washington D.C.: Matushka Nina White; Archdiocese of Western Pennsylvania: Matushka Susanne Senyo; Bulgarian Diocese: Popadia Kristi Jarmus; Diocese of Alaska: Matushka Elisabeth Kolb; Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania: Matushka Mary Solak; Diocese of New England: Matushka Evelyn Kreta; Diocese of New York and New Jersey: Matushka Shari Garretson; Diocese of the South: Matushka Natalia Wooten; Diocese of the West: Protinica Elizabeth Powell; Stavropegial Institutions: Matushka Nancy Rentel; and Clergy Widows: Matushka Diane Pelesh. These clergy wives volunteer to contact the clergy wives in their diocese to connect with and encourage them, to pass on information about retreats and the newsletter, and to share about successes, needs, and concerns at the grass-roots level.
- Webpage & FaceBook Page: A Clergy Wives Page was created on the OCA.org website (<https://www.oca.org/about/clergy-wives-ministry/>), including links to: OCA Clergy Wives FaceBook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/142310372617143/>), retreat links, a directory submission form (QR code), and to the Thriving in Ministry website, (<https://www.thrivingorthodox.org/>).
- Greeting Cards: 'Thank You' cards were mailed to all our retreat guest speakers. Special emailed greeting cards were sent to those listed in the clergy wives directory at Nativity 2021, Pascha 2022, and Mother's Day 2022. A colorful gift set of prayer cards were printed for clergy wives who attended the 2022 AAC Breakfast with the Bishops. These things connect clergy wives and show a caring concern for our fellow sisters in Christ.
- Informational Videos: Two 1.5 minute informational videos were created about CWAG to explain who they are and what they offer. One was shown at the Diocesan Assembly of the Midwest in Oct. 2021, and the other was made available at the 20th AAC OPL display table.

### 4. **Clergy Compensation Project:** Report by Fr. David Lowell

The Office of Pastoral Life produced an easy-to-read Guideline for Clergy Compensation released January 2021. The aim is to make Clergy compensation norms *easily understood* by every parish council in the OCA. The earlier version, in place since the 1990s, was especially helpful for treasurers. The gap in adequate compensation, however, could often be traced to a lack of understanding by parish councils. The revised Compensation Guideline solves that problem. Everyone can understand them. They are a work of simple beauty.

### 5. **Clergy Guidelines Project:** Report by Fr. Kirill Sokolov

The then-Department of Pastoral Life embarked on a project intended to study pastoral practices within the Orthodox Church in America leading to a revision of the "Clergy Guidelines" issued by the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America. The current published edition of the Guidelines was issued in 1998. Archpriest Kirill Sokolov was appointed project manager for this revision work. Upon the appointment of His Grace, Bishop Alexis, to chair the Office of Pastoral Life, this effort gained momentum and with His Grace's leadership a working draft of revised Guidelines was prepared. Guiding principles in the revision included:

- Updating guidelines to reflect pastoral conditions that have changed in the nearly quarter century since promulgation of the previous edition.
- Ensuring that the document is usable for clergy and seminarians in ways that provide more context and definition of vocabulary than was deemed necessary in the past.
- Reflect questions around all orders of clergy, not just parish priests. Included in the current working draft are new sections around attached clergy, deacons, church servers (readers and subdeacons), monastics, and seminarians.



- Conformity to language and directives of the OCA Statute and other decrees of the Holy Synod.

Guidance of other local Orthodox Churches, other jurisdictions operating in North America, seminary curricula, historical textbooks, and of course the body of sacred canon law were consulted throughout this process.

Iterations of the working document were reviewed by Chancellors and other representatives of every Diocese of the Orthodox Church in America. The document was copiously reviewed by the membership of the Pastoral Life Office. At the Spring Session of the Holy Synod, the revised Guidelines were presented by His Grace, Bishop Alexis, to the hierarchs of the Holy Synod.

**6. Retired Clergy Fellowships:** Report by Fr. David Lowell

The Office of Pastoral Life is helping to support the initiative of several Dioceses in the OCA to form Retired Clergy Fellowships. The purpose of the retired clergy fellowship is to shrink the distance and isolation that can happen after retirement. The Diocese of the West began this in September of 2020 as a way to reach and engage retired clergy though it's regional expanse of eleven states. They look at practical and existential issues of retirement as part of the focus. Many retired clergy feel "out of the loop", depending where they are located, so they also schedule sessions with their hierarchs who speak with the retired clergy together. There is a wealth of experience retired clergy have to share, reflections on ministry or the experiences of pilgrimage.

The retired clergy fellowship meetings take place via Zoom. The Office of Pastoral Life does not organize or lead these groups—they are Diocesan initiatives—but the experiences of the Clergy Synaxis and TiM trainings as well as Zoom competencies learned during the pandemic helped stimulate new ideas.

**D. Future Plans, Initiatives & Projects:**

**1. Thriving in Ministry (TiM) Initiative Program:** Report by Fr. Nicholas Solak

We're making a strong push to start two new TiM groups in Alaska. Members of the TiM Program will be going up to Alaska in the fall to meet with the clergy to begin to organize things and see what the opportunities and challenges are there. We're waiting until the end of the year to see if the Lilly Foundation is going to have a sustainability grant, and if we'll be invited to apply for that grant. If we get invited, we'll apply, and if we get it, it'll be @\$250,000 and we'll ask the OCA for \$50,000/year to create a \$300,000/year program to continue doing the TiM work. If they don't have a sustainability grant opportunity, or if they don't invite us to apply, then we'll have to assess if it's time to phase out the program or to try to sustain it ourselves moving forward. Those will be decisions we have to look at once we know what Lilly is going to do.

**2. Synaxis Program:** Report by Fr. Nicholas Solak

Plans are to continue offering these quarterly gatherings to help strengthen the ministry life of our parish priests and deacons.

**3. Clergy Wives Advisory Group (CWAG):** Report by Mka. Jennifer Levine

The next newsletter is scheduled to be published in mid-August 2022. The next online retreat is scheduled for Aug. 27, 2022. An in-person clergy wives leadership retreat is planned in fall 2022 for the Advisory Group and the Diocesan Point People. The hope is to expand care and connection for clergy wives within dioceses and for military clergy wives, clergy widows, and seminarian wives. The plan is to provide and maintain a national online prayer list for clergy wives.

**4. Clergy Compensation Project:** Report by Fr. David Lowell

There are no future plans at this time.

**5. Clergy Guidelines Project:** Report by Fr. Kirill Sokolov

The Holy Synod are in the process of providing final feedback on the Guidelines.

**6. Retired Clergy Fellowships:** Report by Fr. David Lowell

The OPL seeks to support Diocesan pastoral care initiatives that may have wider applications through the OCA. The Diocese of the Midwest and the Diocese of the South are also looking at starting groups for retired clergy. In the next year the OPL hopes to distill some of the experiences and lessons learned from these Retired Clergy Fellowship groups and make the information available to all. What do Retired Clergy have to offer in their later years? Who knows the answer better than the retired clergy themselves.

**E. Conclusion:**

The mission of the Office of Pastoral Life is joy—particularly joy. The goal is to emphasize and foster a connection between clergy and clergy wives with the joy of ministry and to keep them connected to it.

## **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.

## **Report of the Sexual Misconduct Policy Advisory Committee (SMPAC)**

### **20<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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 19<sup>th</sup> 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.



**Report of the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America (FOCA)  
to the 20<sup>th</sup> 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 89<sup>th</sup> National FOCA Convention held in Atlanta in conjunction with the 18<sup>th</sup> 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 Wyslutzky 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/UC9yPeZIKg5JZUjn5mgDYRA>

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

## **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](http://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 19<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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](http://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 117<sup>th</sup> 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.

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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.

**Monks of New Skete**  
**Report to the 20<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> 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.

## 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](http://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 Catherines 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**

### **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 19<sup>th</sup> 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
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>63.5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>13.5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>19.2</b>



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**

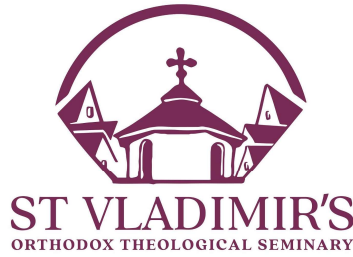
As the Church labors for the extension of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth through the best use of time, talent, and treasure by the People of God, so too, the Seminary labors to achieve its purpose and fulfill its mission through good stewardship of human, financial, physical, and institutional resources. 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:

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Revenue and Support</b>	<b>Expenses</b>
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**  
**REPORT TO THE 20<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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.

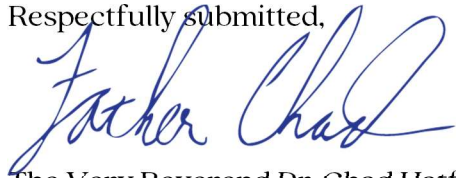
And this is not simply a “relocation.” This is about *expansion*. We’ve simply outgrown our space, and the OCA, the Orthodox Church as a whole, and the world need more from St Vladimir’s: more clergy, more teachers, more choir directors, more writers, more chaplains, and so many other vocations; more 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**

### **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 19<sup>th</sup> 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.