**BYLAWS OF**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ORTHODOX CHURCH**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, PENNSYLVANIA**

**MISSION STATEMENT**

The Mission of the Orthodox Church in America, the local autocephalous Orthodox Church, the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania and its constituent parishes is to be faithful in fulfilling the commandment of Christ to “Go into all the world and make disciples of all Nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all [things that He has] commanded” so that all people may be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth:

To preach, in accordance with God’s will, the fullness of the gospel of the Kingdom to the peoples of North America and to invite them to become members of the Orthodox Church.

To utilize for her mission the various languages of the peoples of this continent.

To be the body of Christ in North America and to be faithful to the tradition of the Holy Orthodox Church.

To witness to the truth, and by God’s grace and in the power of the Holy Spirit, to reveal Christ’s way of sanctification and eternal salvation to all.

**PREAMBLE**

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Orthodox Church, located in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (Pennsylvania/Delaware), is a local parish in the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania of the autocephalous Orthodox Church in America. It is incorporated under the laws of the (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania/State of Delaware) as a religious, not-for-profit corporation under the name of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Hereafter, the corporation shall be referred to as the “Parish.”

The Parish fully accepts the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America, as amended, as normative in its total life.

**DEFINITIONS**

**ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA (“OCA”):** The Orthodox Church in America is an autocephalous Church with territorial jurisdiction in the United States of America, the Commonwealth of Canada and Mexico. Its doctrine, discipline and worship are those of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church as taught by the Holy Scriptures, Holy Tradition, the Ecumenical and Provincial Councils, and the Holy Fathers.

**ALL-AMERICAN COUNCIL:** The All-American Council is the highest legislative and administrative authority within the OCA.

**METROPOLITAN:** Among the bishops of the Orthodox Church, the Metropolitan enjoys primacy, being the first among equals. He is the diocesan bishop of one of the dioceses of the OCA and bears the title “Metropolitan of All America and Canada.” He supervises the internal and external welfare of the OCA and represents it in its relations with other Orthodox Churches, religious organizations, and secular authorities.

**DIOCESE:** A diocese consists of all the parishes within a geographical area. The Diocesan Hierarch governs it with the assistance of a Diocesan Assembly and a Diocesan Council. In this document, “Diocese” shall refer to the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania of the OCA.

**DEANERY:** A specified district or group of parishes within the boundaries of the Diocese. Parishes are assigned to a specific deanery by the Orthodox Church or by the Diocesan Hierarch. A dean, who is a priest chosen by the priests making up the parishes within the deanery or by the Diocesan Hierarch, while subordinated to the Diocesan Hierarch, assumes leadership in the life of the deanery and is the first instance of appeal if a dispute arises within a deanery.

**PARISH:** A local community of the OCA consisting of Orthodox Christians who live in accordance with the teachings and disciplines of the Orthodox Church and who regularly support the programs of their parish. Being a component of the Diocese, it is subordinate to the Diocesan Authority. In this document, “Parish” shall refer to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Orthodox Church.

**PARISH CENSUS:** At least once a year, the Parish is responsible for submitting to the Diocesan Hierarch a Parish Census, which contains the names (first and last) and addresses of the parishioners of the Parish (as defined in Article 2, Sections 1 & 2, below), who are eighteen years of age and older.

**EX OFFICIO MEMBER:** As long as the ex officio member is not under the authority of the society (i.e., he/she is a member, officer or employee of the society), he/she is a member who has the right to make motions and to vote, but none of the obligations. Thus, as an ex officio member of a committee, he/she has the same rights as the other committee members but is not obligated to attend meetings of the committee and is not counted in determining the number required for a quorum or whether a quorum is present. *Robert’s Rules of Order* (10th ed.), § 49, p. 466-67, l. 20-10.

**ARTICLE ONE: THE RECTOR**

1. **Assignment of Rector.** The Rector is the parish priest who leads the Parish and is assigned by the Diocesan Hierarch. The Rector is neither an employee nor a contractor of the parish, but is the leader of the parish under the sole authority of the Diocesan Hierarch.
2. **Responsibilities.** According to the teachings of the Orthodox Church, the Rector is the spiritual father and teacher of his flock and the celebrant of the liturgical worship established by the Church. No activities in the parish can be initiated without his knowledge, approval and blessing, neither should he do anything pertaining to the parish without the knowledge of his parishioners and the parish leaders elected by them, so that always and everywhere there may be unity, mutual trust, cooperation, and love. He teaches and edifies the People of God entrusted to his spiritual care “with no partiality” (James 2:1) and sees to it that all activities within the parish serve the religious goals of the Orthodox Church. In conformity with his teaching office, the Rector shall have final authority over the church school. Specifically, the Rector of the Parish shall:
	1. Serve the liturgical and sacramental needs according to the order of the Typikon of the OCA;
	2. Instruct members of the Parish in the tenets of the Orthodox Faith and piety;
	3. Stimulate church growth;
	4. Implement and be responsible for the religious education of the Parish, which the Parish will support and fund;
	5. Strive to raise the level of spirituality and morality of the members of the Parish;
	6. Preside at all parish meetings (i.e., annual and special);
	7. Appoint two members of the Parish to the Parish Council in accordance with Article Five, of these Bylaws;
	8. Keep the parish records of baptisms, chrismations, marriages and burials; issue copies of the same, and report the statistics annually to the Diocesan Hierarch and at the annual parish meeting;
	9. Report, as may be required by law, to civil authority the marriages performed;
	10. Be the intermediary between the Parish and the Dean and the Diocesan Hierarch;
	11. Submit to the Diocesan Hierarch and the District Dean copies of all appropriate reports, lists and minutes;
	12. Keep the church seal;
	13. Affix the official Parish corporation seal on all documents requiring same;
	14. Be responsible for the well-being of the Parish;
	15. Implement the decisions of the All-American Councils, the Diocesan Assemblies; the Diocesan Hierarch, the District Dean, the annual and special meetings of the Parish, and the Parish Council;
	16. Review and sign the minutes of the annual and special meetings of the Parish and of the Parish Council meetings;
	17. Immediately upon election of Parish Council members and officers, provide a list of the newly elected officers and members of the Parish Council to the Diocesan Hierarch for his blessing.
	18. Be responsible for the supervision of additional clergy who are appointed or assigned by the Diocesan Hierarch; and
	19. Be an ex officio member of all organizations and committees of the Parish and the Parish Council.
3. **Compensation.** The Rector shall be compensated by the Parish, the amount and terms of his salary and benefits being clearly agreed upon at the time of his appointment. At least annually, the Parish shall review the salary and benefits received by the Rector, keeping in mind at least a cost-of-living adjustment. All honoraria given to the Rector are to be retained by him in full without accountability to the Parish.

**ARTICLE TWO: PARISHIONERS**

1. **Parishioners.** Parishioners are those who by virtue of their Baptism and Chrismation as Orthodox Christians are members of the Body of Christ. A parishioner is expected to live a life in conformance with the teachings of the Orthodox Church.
	1. Desire to become a parishioner. Any person desiring to become a parishioner of the Parish shall so inform the Rector, and after fulfilling all conditions of the Parish for said membership, shall then be placed on the Parish Census.
	2. Duties and responsibilities of every parishioner.
		1. Every parishioner is a steward of the Church, and as such should offer his or her time, talent, finances and services as the need arises in the Parish.
		2. All parishioners, as Orthodox Christians, shall:
		3. Govern their lives and activities in accordance with the teachings of the Orthodox Church; and
		4. Regularly attend religious services.
2. **Voting Member.** A voting member is a parishioner who has the privilege of attending, being counted when determining the number required for a quorum, taking part in discussion, and voting at any annual or special parish meeting. A voting member may also have the privilege of being elected as a member of the Parish Council if he or she possesses the appropriate gifts and disposition for working with others. A voting member is “in good standing” if he or she:
	1. Is a baptized and chrismated an Orthodox Christian;
	2. Is at least eighteen (18) years of age;
	3. Partakes of the Sacraments of Confession and Holy Communion in this Parish regularly;
	4. Submits a signed statement of intent to be a voting member of the Parish; and
	5. Has been a practicing Orthodox Christian for at least one (1) year and a parishioner of this Parish for a prior consecutive 3-month period. This last requirement, however, will not be required for the first special meeting of the Parish, which will be called for the purpose of approving these Bylaws.
	6. “Good standing” is determined solely by the Rector.
3. **Transfer Members.** An Orthodox Christian transferring from another parish shall notify the Rector of his/her intent on becoming a member of the Parish through submitting a signed statement of intent. The Rector shall contact the Rector of the person’s previous parish to discuss the standing of the transferring parishioner.
4. **Multiple Parish Membership.** Voting membership in two or more parishes of the OCA is not permitted.

**ARTICLE THREE: PARISH PROPERTY**

1. **Title of Ownership.** The Parish or Parish Corporation shall be the sole owner of all real and personal property, assets and funds of the Parish, and hold such in trust for the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania of the Orthodox Church in America.
2. **Safe keeping of legal documents.** Title to all parish property, real and personal, as well as all policies of insurance and other legal documents, shall be kept for safety in a parish safe or safety deposit box.
3. **Parish Funds.** The funds of the Parish shall be used for the life and growth of the Parish. They shall be deposited in appropriate financial institutions and invested in such amounts as deemed wise and proper by the Parish Council. All deposits shall be made in the name of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Orthodox Church (\_\_\_\_city\_\_\_\_, Pennsylvania/Delaware).
4. **Real Property.** In accordance with Article 4, Section 3.b., the Parish may authorize the Parish Council to purchase real property, or sell, mortgage, lease or otherwise encumber its real property at the annual parish meeting or at a special meeting and with the approval of the Diocesan Hierarch.
5. **Special Gifts,** Bequests and Devises. As far as possible, the Parish should use all special gifts, bequests and devises for the purpose for which they were made. In the event the purpose of such gift, bequest or devise is not feasible or practical, as so determined by the Parish Council and Rector, the Parish Council and Rector may determine an alternate use upon consultation with the donor or the estate representative.
6. **Defection.** The Parish is an integral part of the OCA. Therefore, in the event the Parish were to decide to withdraw from the jurisdiction of the OCA, the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania of the Orthodox Church in America shall be entitled to full title to all the parish assets and property. In the event that a group in a parish decides to withdraw from the jurisdiction of the OCA, that segment of the Parish that remains loyal to the jurisdiction of the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania of the OCA shall retain full title to all the parish assets and property.
7. **Dissolution.** A parish may be dissolved by the decision of the Parish, subject to the ratification of the decision to dissolve by the Diocesan Hierarch. In the event of the dissolution of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ all its funds, properties, equipment and

 (Organization, Church or Society)

endowments shall revert at once and forthwith to the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania. Anything to the contrary notwithstanding, the provisions of this Section cannot be amended, altered, changed or modified. Upon the dissolution of a parish, the sacred and untouchable items (such as the Holy Antimension, the Tabernacle, and the Sacred Vessels) shall be delivered directly to the Diocesan Hierarch.

**ARTICLE FOUR: THE PARISH MEETING**

1. **Meetings**.
	1. **Parish meeting.** The parish meeting shall be the highest administrative body of the Parish, and all major decisions of the Parish, not within the particular authority of the Metropolitan or Diocesan Authority, shall be made by the Parish at its annual or special meeting.
		1. **Annual Meeting.** The annual parish meeting shall be held on any day in the last full week of October of each year.
		2. **Special Meeting.** A special parish meeting may be called only for specific purposes, and the purpose(s) must be stated in the required notice to parishioners regarding the special parish meeting. The agenda of any special parish meeting shall be limited to the purpose(s) stated in the notice pertaining to the same, but will always include an open forum in accordance with Article 4, Paragraph 4, subparagraph b of these Bylaws. A special parish meeting, if deemed necessary, shall be held within forty-five (45) days after:
			1. A request of the Rector;
			2. A request of a majority of the members of the Parish Council; or
			3. A petition containing the signatures of at least 1/3 (one-third) of the parishioners.
	2. **Notice of Meetings.** The Rector shall give notice of the date, time and place of any parish meeting by announcement from the Ambo at the Divine Liturgy on three (3) consecutive Sundays prior to the meeting. The same notice shall also be published in the parish bulletin. A separate written notice regarding any parish meeting shall be served upon all parishioners at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting. The agenda of any parish meeting shall be included in the written notice. In the case of special meetings, or when the annual parish meeting shall have as part of its agenda capital expenditures, the purchase, sale, mortgage, lease or encumbrance of real property of the Parish, or the amendment of these Bylaws, the written notice shall specify the matter or matters to be acted upon at the parish meeting.
2. **Quorum.** The required quorum for a parish meeting shall consist of not less than thirty-five percent (35%) of voting members. If the quorum is not present at any scheduled parish meeting, the meeting shall be adjourned to the following week, at which time the members then present will constitute a quorum.
3. **Voting.**
	1. Only voting members as defined in Article 2, Section 2 of these Bylaws, shall have the privilege to vote and to participate in discussions at any parish meeting.
	2. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of the voting members present shall be required to amend these Bylaws or for the approval of any capital expenditures in excess of $5,000, including the purchase, sale, mortgage or lease of parish property (real or personal), but in no event may such expenditure be made with the approval of less than thirty-five percent (35 %) of all voting members of the Parish.
	3. For all other matters, the majority vote of voting members present at a parish meeting shall decide any question or issue brought to a vote, except as otherwise required by ecclesiastical or civil law.
	4. No voting shall be permitted by proxy.
	5. A ballot vote shall be used if so requested by a voting member of the Parish. If a ballot vote is used, the presiding officer shall appoint two (2) parishioners to count the votes, announce the results, and destroy the ballots.
4. **Order of the Meetings.**
	1. **Presiding Officer.** Pursuant to the Statute of the OCA, the Rector shall preside over all parish meetings, although, if he desires, he may authorize the Council Chairman of the Parish Council to preside. The presiding officer determines whether a quorum is present before calling the parish meeting to order, calls the meeting to order, offers business at meetings for deliberation, directs debate, formulates decisions, gives voices and takes them away.
	2. **Agenda to include opportunity for parishioner to speak.** The agenda of every annual parish meeting and special meeting shall always include the opportunity for any parishioner to speak on a matter deemed pertinent to the harmony and progress of the parish meeting, and therefore, the Parish.
	3. **Matters under the general authority of the Parish.** The following matters shall be under the general authority of the annual or special parish meeting:
		1. Discussion on matters affecting the Parish and its mission as the Body of Christ;
		2. Receipt of the message of the Rector and of the report of the Parish Council Chairperson;
		3. Receipt of the reports of the Treasurer and the Auditing Committee as to receipts and expenditures of parish funds;
		4. Adoption of the proposed budget;
		5. Consideration of the construction of and capital repairs to the church edifice, rectory, and/or other parish buildings;
		6. Election of lay members to the Parish Council;
			1. At the initial meeting after adopting the bylaws the Parish Council Members shall be elected from the proposed nominees as follows:
				1. Six (6) total members shall be elected:

Ballots will be prepared with all nominees listed and a method for voting for them indicated

Voting members may only vote for six nominees on their ballot

Ballots indicating multiple votes for a single nominee will be disqualified

Ballots must have as many votes as there are open positions.

Ballots will be tallied by a Counting Committee appointed at the meeting by the Rector

 The two nominees with the highest number of votes will serve a term of three years, the next two highest will serve a term of two years, the following two highest will serve a term of one year

* + - * 1. The results of the election shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting, including the vote counts for all nominees
				2. The newly elected members of the Parish Council together with the appointees will constitute the new Parish Council and will be installed by the Rector once confirmed by the Diocesan Hierarch.
			1. At subsequent meetings of the Parish, Parish Council Members shall be elected from the proposed nominees as follows:
				1. Two (2) total members shall be elected

Ballots will be prepared with all nominees listed and a method for voting for them indicated

Voting members may only vote for two nominees on their ballot

Ballots indicating multiple votes for a single nominee will be disqualified

Ballots will be tallied by a Counting Committee appointed at the meeting by the Rector

 The two nominees with the highest number of votes will serve a term of three years

* + - * 1. The results of the election shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting, including the vote counts for all nominees
				2. The newly elected members of the Parish Council together with the appointees and those members whose terms have not expired will constitute the new Parish Council and will be installed by the Rector once confirmed by the Diocesan Hierarch.
		1. Election of Financial Secretary
		2. Election of three (3) members for an Auditing Committee
		3. Consideration of and action upon any matters affecting the welfare of the Parish that are not within the exclusive competence of the Rector.
	1. **Arbitration of procedure and Bylaws.** Any dispute that arises over the proper meeting procedure or the meaning of the Bylaws shall be determined by the Rector in consultation with the Officers of the Parish Council and any other voting members that he may decide to include. The Rector's decision is final.
1. **Record of a Parish Meeting.** The Secretary of the Parish Council shall write in the minutes all decisions of the annual or special parish meeting. Within twenty-one (21) days of the adjournment of the parish meeting, the Secretary shall present under his or her signature the prepared minutes to the Rector and Council Chair for their signatures.
	1. **Rector’s disagreement with parish decision.** In case of disagreement with one or several decisions of a parish meeting, the Rector’s statement of dissent must be recorded in the minutes and the whole matter submitted to the Diocesan Hierarch. Parish officers may state their opinion, first to the Dean of the district, then to the Diocesan Hierarch.
	2. **Diocesan Hierarch’s review and response of Parish decisions required.** After review of the parish meeting minutes, the Diocesan Hierarch shall approve or disapprove the decisions and resolutions, including elections, in those minutes. No decisions or resolutions of a parish meeting, including elections, shall become effective until approved by the Diocesan Hierarch.

**ARTICLE FIVE: THE PARISH COUNCIL**

1. **Election and Composition.** The affairs of the Parish shall be administered by a governing body which shall be named the Parish Council. The Parish Council shall consist of:
	1. The Rector
	2. Six (6) elected members
		1. To be elected by the voting membership at the Annual Parish Meeting in accordance with Article Four, Section 4, c, v.
	3. Two (2) appointed members selected by the Rector
		1. Each year the Rector will appoint two members to serve on the Parish Council and will announce his selection at the Annual Parish Meeting,
		2. The appointed members of the Parish Council are subject to the eligibility requirements as described in Article Five, Sec. 10, a, but are not subject to the restrictions on serving with relatives as described in Article Five, Sec. 10, b.
2. **Term of office**
	1. **Annual election.** Lay members of the Parish Council shall be elected each year at the annual parish meeting, in accordance with Article Four, Section 4, c, vi, and shall serve until their successors have been elected and installed.
	2. **Term Limits.**
		1. Elected Members may not be elected to serve on the Parish Council for more than two consecutive three year terms, but nothing shall prevent the election of such person for more than two non-consecutive terms.
		2. Appointed Members serve solely at the pleasure of the Rector, with approval from the Diocesan Hierarch, but may not serve for more than six consecutive years.
	3. **Parish Council Officers.** The Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, are elected by the Parish Council at its first meeting following the annual meeting.
		1. No lay member shall concurrently hold more than one of these offices.
		2. Parish Council Officers can serve concurrently in another capacity, with the following exceptions:
			1. The Treasurer may not serve as an auditor or as Financial Secretary,
			2. The Chairman may not serve on the Nominating Committee
	4. **Confirmation and Installation.** Notwithstanding any provisions contained in this Section, each elected officer and member of the Parish Council, the Auditors and the Financial Secretary shall assume his or her duties only after his or her election has been approved by the Diocesan Hierarch and he or she has taken the prescribed oath of office administered by the Rector. Incumbents shall hold office until the new officers and members are actually installed.
3. **Parish Council Meetings.**
	1. **Day and Time.** Regular meetings of the Parish Council shall be held at least once a month at a date and time fixed by the Chair in conjunction with the Rector.
	2. **Special meetings.** The Rector or the Chair may call a special meeting of the Parish Council.
	3. **Notice.** The parish bulletin shall serve as adequate notice to all parishioners of Parish Council meetings. The Secretary may also telephone or email the Parish Council officers and members at least three (3) days prior to the date of a Parish Council meeting to provide notice of a Parish Council meeting.
	4. **Quorum.** The attendance of five (5) Parish Council officers and/or members will constitute a quorum for any Parish Council meeting.
	5. **Voting.** A majority vote of those members in attendance can decide an issue brought before the Parish Council. The Rector does not vote, except to break a tie. In the event the Rector’s vote would make a tie, the motion fails.
	6. **Finance.** Each month the finances of the parish will be reviewed for adherence to the budget. The budget shall be considered as a total sum of money to be managed, though line items should be created for ease of discussion. Expenditures will be adjusted in accordance with income and circumstance. The parish will be notified when the cash reserves fall below two months projected expense, or when the overall annual expenses are projected to exceed 105% of the approved budget, or when any line item is projected to exceed 125% of the approved amount.
	7. **Implementation of decisions.** All decisions of the Parish Council must be submitted to the Rector for confirmation before becoming effective.
	8. **Minutes.** The Chair, Secretary and Rector shall sign the minutes of the Parish Council meetings. In the case of the Rector’s disagreement with one or several decisions of the Parish Council, his dissenting opinion shall be recorded in the minutes and the matter referred to the parish meeting. The signed minutes are the property of the Parish and become part of the parish archives.
	9. **Open meetings.** All Parish Council meetings shall generally be open to all parishioners. An open forum may be held, at which time a member of the Parish, recognized by the Chair or presiding officer, may speak on an issue. Only members of the Parish Council, however, may make a formal resolution or vote on any issue.
	10. **Closed meetings.** At its discretion, the Parish Council may, under extraordinary circumstances, deem it necessary to have the Parish Council meeting limited only to its members. In such an instance, the minutes shall note the Parish Council’s restriction.
4. **Removal from Parish Council.** All Parish Council members are expected to attend all Parish Council meetings during their tenure of office. The absence of any Parish Council member from three (3) consecutive regular meetings without reasonable cause will render him or her subject to dismissal by the Parish Council. Any council member who engages in divisive behavior may be dismissed by the Rector.
5. **Vacancies in Parish Council.**
	1. **Elected Members.** In the event an elected member is unable to serve, or shall decline to serve, the Parish Council shall take from the list of most recent nominees a substitute in the order in which these nominees received elective votes and continue this process until a substitute member is qualified.
	2. **Appointed Members.** In the event that an appointed member is unable to serve, or shall decline to serve, The Rector shall appoint an eligible replacement.
6. **Officers of the Parish Council and their assigned duties.** The duties of the various lay members of the Parish Council shall generally be as follows:
	1. **Chair.** The Chair shall be the principal lay executive officer of the Parish, and, subject to the control of the Parish Council, shall supervise and direct, together with the Rector, all of the administrative affairs of the Parish. In particular, the Chair shall:
		1. Look after the safekeeping of official parish documents;
		2. Be responsible for the regular lay duties during the divine services;
		3. Welcome guests and visitors;
		4. Appoint a Nominating Committee in conjunction with the Rector, prior to any Parish Meetings at which elections will be held, and report on the Nominating Committees recommendations prior to said meeting
		5. Be an ex officio member of all parish organizations and committees, except for the nominating committee; and;
		6. Perform such other duties incident to the office as may be imposed by law, by the Articles of Incorporation, by these Bylaws, or as may be prescribed from time to time by the Parish Council.
	2. **Vice Chair.** The Vice Chair shall:
		1. In the absence of the Chair, assume and perform the responsibilities of the Chair;
		2. Automatically succeed to the office of the Chair in the event of its vacancy;
		3. Preside over the parish beautification committee, assuring the appropriate maintenance and upkeep of parish properties; and
		4. Perform such other duties incident to the office as may be imposed by law, by the Articles of Incorporation, by these Bylaws, or as may be prescribed from time to time by the Parish Council.
	3. **Secretary.** The Secretary shall:
		1. Take accurate minutes of all Parish Council meetings;
		2. Conduct the necessary correspondence of the Parish;
		3. Take accurate minutes of the annual parish meeting and all special meetings of the Parish;
		4. Be responsible for posting notice of all meetings of the Parish and of the Parish Council;
		5. In consultation with the Rector, maintain both the Parish Census and list of the parishioners, which shall contain the address and voting qualifications of each parishioner, and shall record therein the fact and date of termination, if any, of the membership of any such parishioner; and
		6. Perform such other duties incident to the office as may be imposed by law, by the Articles of Incorporation, by these Bylaws, or as may be prescribed from time to time by the Parish Council.
	4. **Treasurer.** The Treasurer shall:
		1. Have the care, charge and custody of all money and funds received by the Parish;
		2. Deposit same in such financial depositories as shall be designated by the Parish Council ;
		3. Open his or her records for inspection by the Rector, Parish Council or auditing committee at any reasonable time requested;
			1. Prepare and present:
			2. Regular reports to the Parish Council ;
			3. An annual report at the parish meeting; and
			4. A proposed budget for the coming year, which initially will be prepared for and approved by the Parish Council before the annual parish meeting.
		4. Pay parish expenses in accordance with the resolutions of the Parish Council. All handwritten checks shall be co-signed by two (2) of the three (3) following persons: Chair; Vice Chair; and Treasurer. The Treasurer is permitted to use on-line banking following a process approved by the Parish Council which dictates that the Chair or Vice Chair will view and approve pending payments prior to disbursement.
		5. Perform such other duties incident to the office as may be imposed by law, by the Articles of Incorporation, by these Bylaws, or as may be prescribed from time to time by the Parish Council.
	5. **Parish Council Member.** The Parish Council Members shall give their advice, recommendations and suggestions in regard to the administration of the Parish. No one speaks as a Council Member apart from a properly assembled meeting as there should be no meetings before the meeting. They also shall perform such other duties as may be imposed by law, by the Articles of Incorporation, by these Bylaws, or as may be prescribed from time to time by the Parish Council.
7. **General duties and authorities of the Parish Council.** The general duties and authority of the Parish Council shall consist of the following:
	1. To serve the Holy Orthodox Church and the OCA, to work for its spiritual and material progress, and to support its educational and charitable programs and institutions;
	2. To prepare and examine all matters to be brought up at a parish meeting;
	3. To administrate the affairs of the Parish between the annual parish and/or special meetings;
	4. To purchase the necessities for the Parish’s church and buildings;
	5. To foster the establishment and maintenance of parish committees and organizations;
	6. To carry out and put into effect all decisions of the Parish meetings, Diocesan Assemblies, and All-American Councils;
	7. To count the weekly collection immediately following the Sunday Divine Liturgy;
	8. To establish comprehensive financial practices to be followed in the day to day operation of the parish to protect the parish assets and to guard their own reputation. (A sample of such practices may be found on the Diocesan Website DOEPA.ORG, under the tab, RESOURCES, DOCUMENTS, HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR TREASURERS). These may need to be amended from time to time as technology changes and
	9. All other matters affecting the interests of the Parish or its membership that are not within the particular authority of the parish meetings or higher authority.
8. **Financial Secretary and Auditing Committee.** At all times, the Parish Council shall be aided in its administration by the following persons, who will be elected annually at the annual parish meeting and whose terms of office will conform with Article 5, Section 2:
	1. **Financial Secretary.** The Financial Secretary shall keep accurate records of contributions on a weekly basis and submit a full report to the Parish at its annual meeting. At year-end a report will be rendered to the Rector and Treasurer, who together will issue financial statements directly to the parishioners. Upon the request from an individual parishioner for the issuance of a quarterly financial statement, the Financial Secretary will provide an unofficial report to the requesting individual. The Financial Secretary will hold the list containing the envelope number-to-name cross-reference, thereby assuring privacy of individual contributions. No general financial statement, including names and amounts, is to be published.
	2. **Auditing Committee.** The Auditing Committee shall consist of three (3) parishioners responsible for auditing the records of the Treasurer and all subsidiary organizations of the parish at least semi-annually, to verify the accuracy of the books and ensure that proper safeguards are in place.
		1. The Auditing Committee shall **r**eport its findings and conclusions to the Parish Council following each audit and to the Parish at the annual parish meeting.
		2. All three auditors shall be elected by at the Annual Parish Meeting and will serve a term of one year.
		3. Auditors may not serve more than six consecutive years.
9. **Nominating Committee.** At least one month before the annual meeting of the Parish, the Rector and the Chairman of the Parish Council shall appoint a Nominating Committee comprised of the Rector, ex officio, and at least two (2) members from the voting membership of the Parish.
	1. **Eligibility for Nomination.** To be qualified for election to the Parish Council a candidate must:
		1. be 21 years of age or over,
		2. be a Voting Member of the Parish for at least two years,
		3. have fulfilled the canonical requirements of the Faith, as verified by the Rector, and
		4. be a person of the Church in conduct and speech. (Standards are obviously higher for those who choose to serve in a leadership capacity)
	2. **Limitation on Relatives.** No one may be nominated to serve on the Parish Council concurrently with one’s spouse, parent, child, sibling, in-law or more than one first cousin, niece or nephew.
		1. This limitation excludes the appointed members of the Parish Council
			1. Elected members are limited in their relationships with each other, but not to appointed members
			2. Appointed members are not restricted in regards to their relations with other Parish Council Members
	3. **Number of Nominees.** The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least twice as many persons as there are vacancies to be filled. Those nominated must have indicated their willingness to serve if elected.
		1. Exception: At the initial Parish Meeting following adoption of these Bylaws, the Number of Nominees required will be nine (9).
	4. **Nominating Committee Report.** The Nominating Committee shall provide its report to the Chairman of the Parish Council, and said report shall be read to the Parish Council prior to the Annual Parish meeting.
		1. The approved report shall be included in the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting
	5. **No Nominations from the Floor.** No additional nominations may be made from the floor of the annual Parish Meeting in order to avoid publically embarrassing anyone who may not meet the requirements set forth above.

**ARTICLE SIX: PARISH ORGANIZATIONS**

1. **Parish Organizations.** From time to time, individually affiliated parish organizations may be established or recognized by the Parish for specific purposes deemed compatible with parish life, such as, providing a more formal organization for parish projects and promoting additional fellowship in the parish community. Such organizations shall have the approval of, and are accountable to, the Parish Council and the Rector.
2. **Ex officio membership.** The Rector and Chair shall be ex-officio members of all parish organizations and committees, except that the Chair shall not be a member of the nominating committee.
3. **Bylaws.** Bylaws of such parish organizations shall be consistent with these Bylaws, the directives of the Diocesan Hierarch, and the Statute of the OCA.
4. **Annual reports.** All parish organizations shall submit an annual report of activities and accountability at the annual parish meeting and also make available to the Parish Council an annual financial statement.
5. **Dissolution.** In the event that any such parish organizations are dissolved, its assets shall be turned over to the Parish. In the event that the Parish is dissolved, the organizations, which were subsidiaries of that Parish, likewise shall be dissolved, with all of those assets to be disposed pursuant to Article 3, Section 7 of these Bylaws.

**ARTICLE SEVEN: PARISH FISCAL YEAR**

1. The fiscal year of the Parish shall begin on the first day of January and end on the last day of December in each year.

**ARTICLE EIGHT: CEMETERY**

(Note: Not all parishes will have cemeteries associated with them, so this is an optional section of the Bylaws. If the parish does have a cemetery than the following subsections are recommended)

# **Location.** *Describe the location of the cemetery, its legal boundaries, and any specific ordinances governing set-backs or other legal issues.*

### **Administration.** *Describe the administrative organization for the cemetery and its relationship to the Parish Council.*

#### **Records.** (*Sample Language: The Parish Council shall be responsible for maintaining records of grave locations and occupants. The Rector shall be responsible for providing required records to the appropriate government agencies to record interments.)*

#### **Financial Statements and Audits***. If the cemetery is set up with a separate account from the parish a financial statement and audit shall be prepared and presented to the Parish Council and at the Parish Meeting on an annual basis. The parish Auditing Committee shall perform the audit.*

### **Purpose.** *Sample Language: The purpose of the cemetery shall be to provide a burial ground for the interment of deceased parishioners of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Church, and other deceased persons eligible for interment in accordance with the provisions of these By-Laws.*

### **Interment Eligibility.** *Describe eligibility requirements*

### **Fees.** (*Sample Language: Fees for interments and the opening and closing of graves shall be determined by the Parish Council and announced at the Annual Parish Meeting. The interment fee shall include movement of the deceased from the church to the grave, and lowering the deceased into the grave.)*

### **Monuments or Markers.** (*Sample Language: The Parish Council shall make provision to ensure all graves are properly marked in a manner conforming to the tradition of the Orthodox Church. Monuments and Markers must be approved by the Parish Council prior to installation. )*

### **Cremation.** No cremated remains may be buried or scattered in the cemetery.

### **Services**. (*Sample Language: The Rector will determine the serving priest for all burial services.*

#### *Only canonical Orthodox priests may conduct burial services within the cemetery.)*

### **Hold harmless.** (*Sample Language: The Parish Council shall ensure appropriate documentation is completed, and retained, to provide legal protection for the parish from lawsuits concerning damages to monuments, vandalism, inaccurate records of grave locations, and other issues that may arise concerning the cemetery.)*

**ARTICLE NINE: AMENDMENTS**

These Bylaws may be amended in the following manner:

(1) The proposed change(s) shall first be submitted to the Parish Council for consideration;

The Parish Council shall then place the proposed change(s) on the agenda of the next annual parish meeting or special meeting and also give timely notice to the parishioners, as defined by Article Four, Section 1(d) of these Bylaws, of the specific, proposed change(s);

The proposed change(s) shall be adopted in accordance with Article IV, Section 3.b. of these Bylaws at the annual or special parish meeting; and

All changes to these Bylaws shall not take effect unless approved by the Diocesan Hierarch.

**ADOPTION**

These Bylaws were accepted at a parish meeting held on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at which the appropriate quorum was present, and the parishioners were duly notified, have become effective on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, when they were approved by the Diocesan Authority, His Eminence \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Hierarch of the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania.

These bylaws were amended at a special parish meeting held\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_,\_\_\_\_\_\_, at which the appropriate quorum was present, and the parishioners were duly notified. At this date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ they are pending approval by the Diocesan Authority.