



Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania

Bylaws of the

Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania

Unanimously Approved at the Diocesan Assembly

in Jermyn, PA on January 29, 2016 (Revised May 22, 2023)

The Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania (DPEP) is incorporated in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in compliance with the requirements of 15 Pa S. §7316 (relating to articles of incorporation). It is a constituent member of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) and as such is bound by the Statutes of the OCA and its relevant articles as revised at the 18th All American Council held in 2015. The Diocese is currently headquartered at: 325 N Walnut Street, Bath, PA 18014.

This document will present the relevant articles of the OCA Statutes with notes added specific to the DPEP beneath the associated verbiage. The notes will clarify and specify the DPEP interpretation of the OCA Statutes, but are not intended to modify or override those Statutes.

For ease of reference the Article numbers from the OCA Statutes have been maintained in this document, consequently the first article referred to will be Article VII – The Diocese. The following articles, with DPEP annotations will constitute the Bylaws of the DPEP:

Article VII – The Diocese

Article VIII – The Diocesan Bishop

Article IX – The Diocesan Assembly

Article X – The Diocesan Council

Article XI – The Deanery

Article XII – The Parish

ARTICLE XIII – Monasticism

ARTICLE XIV – Stavropegial Institutions

ARTICLE XV – Ecclesiastical Courts

ARTICLE XVI – National Groups

ARTICLE XVII – AMENDMENTS



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ARTICLE XVIII – EFFECTIVE DATE

ARTICLE VII – THE DIOCESE

Section 1: Definition

The Diocese is the basic Church body which unites Parishes and institutions, usually in a defined geographical area, under the authority of a Diocesan Bishop. He governs with the assistance of a Diocesan Assembly and a Diocesan Council. For purposes of the Statute, the Diocesan Bishop, the Diocesan Council and the Diocesan Assembly, each acting in its proper capacity, shall constitute the Diocesan Authority.

DPEP – The Diocese incorporates the areas of Pennsylvania and Delaware as described in the archives of the OCA. A listing of the parishes in the DPEP is provided in Appendix A.

Section 2: Establishment of and Modification to a Diocese

- a. The Holy Synod may modify the boundaries of an existing Diocese, erect new Dioceses and determine their boundaries, and suppress or merge Dioceses according to the needs of the Church.
- b. The Holy Synod may establish Dioceses that are not defined by a specific geographical area, but rather are composed of Parishes and institutions that are characterized by a particular identity, as recognized and defined by the Holy Synod. Parishes and institutions affiliated with such Dioceses shall be governed by their own Diocesan Bishop, who shall exercise within his Diocese the same authority as the Diocesan Bishop of a geographical Diocese.

Section 3: Diocesan Bylaws

Each Diocese shall have Bylaws adopted by and subject to amendment by the Diocesan Authority.

The Bylaws, among other provisions, shall provide for:

- a. The nomination of a Diocesan Bishop in accordance with Article VIII, Sections 5-7;
- b. The composition and election of the Diocesan Council;
- c. The appointment, dismissal, and duties of Diocesan Officers;
- d. The terms of office, method of election, and duties of the Diocesan Auditing Committee, and,
- e. The amendment of the Diocesan Bylaws.

Section 4: Deaneries

The Diocese may be divided into Deaneries, each headed by a District Dean, who is selected according to the provisions of Article XI, Section 2, unless otherwise provided for in the Diocesan Bylaws. The number, names, and delineation of the Deaneries shall be determined by the Diocesan Authority.

DPEP – There are three deaneries in the DPEP: Frackville, Wilkes-Barre and Philadelphia. A listing of the churches in each is shown in appendix A.

ARTICLE VIII - THE DIOCESAN BISHOP



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Section 1: Definition

By virtue of his canonical election by the Holy Synod and episcopal ordination, the Diocesan Bishop possesses full canonical authority within his Diocese, and shall exercise it with the assistance of Diocesan clergy and laity. He is the Chief Shepherd of his Diocese. The Diocesan Bishop is a member of the Holy Synod in accordance with Article II, Section 1: He shall participate in its sessions and provide a regular report to the Holy Synod on the state of his Diocese. The Diocesan Bishop shall have the title of a principal city within his Diocese, his title being determined by the Holy Synod. He shall reside within the limits of his Diocese. In all matters, the decisions and pronouncements of the Diocesan Bishop are final, except insofar as they are subject to appeal as provided in the Sacred Canons and the Statute.

Section 2: Competence

The following are within the competence of the Diocesan Bishop. The Diocesan Bishop shall:

- a. Expound the Faith and moral teaching of the Orthodox Church and guide his flock in accordance with Church doctrine;
- b. Have the right of initiative and authoritative guidance in all matters concerning the life of his Diocese, and may issue pastoral letters, instructions and regulations for the guidance of clergy and laity;
- c. Establish Parishes, missions, provisional missions, mission stations, chapels, and monasteries in his Diocese;
- d. Consecrate churches and chapels, erect permanent altars, and consecrate and provide Holy Antimensia within his Diocese;
- e. Distribute Holy Chrism consecrated by the Metropolitan;
- f. Maintain custody, with the appropriate Officers of the Diocese, of the patrimony of the Diocese;
- g. Assume possession, with the appropriate Officers of the Diocese, of the sacred and untouchable items, as well as all official records and archives, in all cases of the dissolution of a Parish or monastery in the Diocese;
- h. Ensure that his Diocese and its Parishes and institutions are properly organized in accordance with local civil law and that they hold clear and unambiguous title to their real property with the exception of encumbrances incurred in normal course with the permission of the Bishop¹;

¹ Parish Administration (Clarification added at Diocesan Council Meeting May 10, 2022, see ARTICLE XII).

In accordance with Article XII, Sections 1A, 2A, 8 and Article VIII, Section H of the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America, If, at any time, a parish fails to have its Annual Parish Assembly in accordance with its own Bylaws as required of Non-Profit Corporations, and / or is unable to elect or staff a parish council capable of fulfilling its legal administrative and fiduciary responsibilities, as stipulated by its bylaws, or a parish council capable of understanding its own bylaws, the Statute of the OCA or Diocesan Bylaws and provide appropriate financial statements and reports to their parishioners and the Diocesan Authority; does not have a resident priest; and / or has dwindling financial resources, the administration of that parish will be forfeited / relinquished to the Diocesan hierarch and administered according to his direction.

Relevant OCA Statute provisions, Article XII on the parish, and Article VIII on the Diocesan Bishop.

Article XII



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- i. Convene and preside over the Diocesan Assembly and Diocesan Council;
- j. Approve or disallow the decisions of the Diocesan Assembly, Diocesan Council, and Deanery and Parish meetings;

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1. A. The organization and administration of a Parish are subject to the Statute, the statute or Bylaws of the Diocese, and the Parish Bylaws approved by the Diocesan Authority. The Orthodox Church in general and The Orthodox Church in America in particular are hierarchical in structure.
 2. A. The Bishop is the spiritual leader of all Parishes within his Diocese. In consultation with the Diocesan Council, he shall establish, territorially define, consolidate with another Parish, or suppress a Parish. He appoints Parish Clergy, maintaining a relationship with them that is at once hierarchical and conciliar, marked by obedience and collaboration. He has the obligation and right of visitation to the Parish and receives and approves regular reports on Parish life. In case of conflict and disorder within the Parish, he takes all necessary measures to resolve them consistent with the Sacred Canons and the Statute.

8. The following matters are within the competence of the Parish Council. The Parish Council shall:

- a. Exercise fiduciary responsibility for the Parish;
- b. Implement within its competence the decisions of the Parish Assembly, the Diocesan Authority, and the All-American Council;
- c. Formulate, implement, and direct stewardship programs;
- d. Oversee implementation of the budget adopted by the Parish Assembly;
- e. Authorize any fundraising activity within the Parish;
- f. Manage, inventory, and maintain Parish properties, both real and personal;
- g. Regulate use of Parish facilities;
- h. Maintain and verify the official roster of the Parish's general and voting membership;
- i. Oversee and regularly receive reports from Parish ministries and organizations;
- j. Prepare reports on aspects of Parish life within its competence for the annual Parish Assembly;
- k. Propose an annual budget for consideration at the annual Parish Assembly; and
- l. Set a date and propose an agenda for Parish Assemblies.

ARTICLE VIII

H. Ensure that his Diocese and its Parishes and institutions are properly organized in accordance with local civil law and that they hold clear and unambiguous title to their real property with the exception of encumbrances incurred in normal course with the permission of the Bishop;



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- k. Appoint or confirm Diocesan Officers, as provided in the Diocesan Bylaws, and maintain general oversight of and bear general responsibility for the efficient administration of his Diocese;
- l. Ordain qualified graduates of Orthodox seminaries to the priesthood and diaconate as well as lower clergy for his Diocese;
- m. Ordain candidates to the priesthood and diaconate for his Diocese otherwise qualified, with the approval of the Holy Synod;
- n. Appoint, transfer, remove, and grant retirement to Parish Clergy of his Diocese;
- o. Accept clergy at his discretion from another Diocese of The Orthodox Church in America, receiving their personal dossier and a canonical release;
- p. Release clergy at his discretion to another Diocese of The Orthodox Church in America, at the request of its Diocesan Bishop, issuing a canonical release and conveying their personal dossier and other appropriate documentation;
- q. Exercise discipline over Diocesan clergy and laity in all cases not requiring the action of a Church Court;
- r. Appoint the members of Diocesan Courts and exercise final authority regarding acceptance of their decisions and action upon their findings; in matters in which final judgment has been reserved to the Holy Synod by the Statute or by resolution of the Holy Synod, convey to the Synod the finding of a Diocesan Court and all relevant documentation relating to the case and the Court's finding;
- s. Honor worthy clergy and laity of his Diocese with Diocesan awards, or request the Holy Synod to confer synodal awards in the prescribed manner;
- t. Make canonical visits to the Parishes, monasteries, and institutions of his Diocese on his own initiative;
- u. Grant charters and exercise general oversight over Diocesan monastic communities and, in consultation with the particular community, confirm its superior; and

DPEP – With the exception of St. Tikhon's Monastery which is under the omophorion of the Metropolitan of All America & Canada.

- v. Establish Diocesan educational or philanthropic institutions according to the needs of his Diocese, issue their charters, and appoint officers as provided in their charters.

The Diocesan Bishop possesses the authority necessary to exercise his episcopal ministry within the Church in conformity with the Sacred Canons.

DPEP – The authority of the Diocesan Hierarchy is absolute as concerning the spiritual and administrative rule of the Diocese. Any uncertainty concerning any of these Bylaws shall be resolved by the Diocesan Hierarchy, who in our teaching "divides the word of truth" and cannot be overruled.

Section 3: Compensation

The Diocesan Bishop shall receive appropriate compensation commensurate with his position and responsibilities, a suitable retirement plan, and a residence or a housing allowance, as determined by norms and practices of the Diocese.



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DPEP – The financial support for the Diocesan Hierarchy shall be in compliance with the Compensation Guidelines established by the OCA. The residence costs shall include utilities, maintenance, housekeeping, and communications. An adequate travel and vehicle allowance shall also be included.

Section 4: Auxiliary Bishop

An Auxiliary Bishop may be appointed to the Diocese, with a city in the Diocese as his titular see, upon nomination by the Diocesan Bishop in consultation with the Diocesan Council, and canonical election by the Holy Synod, confirmed by the Metropolitan.

An Auxiliary Bishop shall have his duties, responsibilities, and rights defined by the Diocesan Bishop and the Diocesan Bylaws. He shall be an ex officio member of the Diocesan Council and the Diocesan Assembly.

He shall receive adequate and proper compensation to be determined by norms and practices of the Diocese.

Section 5: Vacancy in Office

The office of Diocesan Bishop shall be declared vacant by the Holy Synod in the event of the incumbent's death, retirement or resignation accepted by the Holy Synod, medical incapacity accepted by the Holy Synod, transfer, or deposition by canonical process.

Section 6: Qualifications

- a. If he is not already a bishop, the candidate for the office of bishop shall be nominated from among the clergy or laity, monastic, celibate, or widowed.
- b. To receive episcopal ordination, the nominee must satisfy all the requirements of the Sacred Canons pertaining to this highest of all ecclesiastical offices.
- c. It is preferable that the candidate have completed a course of study in a graduate school of Orthodox theology.
- d. He should be conversant in the English language and, as appropriate, in another language commonly spoken among the faithful of the Diocese.
- e. If at the time of his nomination he is a layman or a celibate or widowed priest, he shall pronounce at least the first monastic vows (rasophore), if he has not already pronounced such vows.
- f. Diocesan bishops shall not be eligible for nomination for another Diocese.

Section 7: The Vacant See

- a. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Diocesan Bishop, a Locum Tenens, appointed by the Metropolitan, shall convoke and preside over a special Diocesan Assembly for the sole purpose of nominating a candidate as Diocesan Bishop.
- b. Should the election of a new Diocesan Bishop be delayed for an extraordinary length of time, the Holy Synod may authorize the Locum Tenens to assume additional authority proper to a Diocesan Bishop, as required by the best interests and continuing welfare of the Diocese.
- c. The special Diocesan Assembly shall conduct the nomination in accord with the provisions of the Diocesan Bylaws, and the Locum Tenens shall submit the nominee to the Holy Synod according to procedures established by the Holy Synod.



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- d. Upon the acceptance of the nomination by the Holy Synod, the candidate shall be summoned to a session of the Holy Synod for canonical election.
- e. If the special Diocesan Assembly fails to nominate a candidate acceptable to the Holy Synod, the Synod may elect another qualified candidate as Diocesan Bishop, or they may authorize another Diocesan Assembly to nominate.
- f. With his acceptance of the canonical election by the Holy Synod, the new Diocesan Bishop, if already of episcopal rank, has full authority and prerogatives as Diocesan Bishop of the Diocese to which he has been elected.
- g. If the Bishop-Elect is not yet of episcopal rank, his ordination should occur within thirty (30) days after his canonical election by the Holy Synod. The Metropolitan, or a senior hierarch of the Holy Synod whom he may delegate, shall preside.
- h. The new Diocesan Bishop's enthronement in his Diocese shall occur within two (2) weeks following his ordination or, if he is already of episcopal rank, his canonical election to the Diocese. The enthronement shall take place in the Diocese, preferably in the Diocesan cathedral. The Metropolitan, or a senior hierarch of the Holy Synod whom he may delegate, shall preside.

Section 8: Mission Activity

The Diocesan Bishop shall propagate and expound the Faith and moral teaching of the Orthodox Church among all people within the boundaries of his Diocese, both Orthodox Christians and those not members of the Orthodox Church.

The Diocesan Bishop shall:

- a. Ensure that his clergy witness to the Orthodox faith in their communities;
- b. Direct Parish Clergy also to extend their pastoral activity to the unchurched;
- c. Establish missions for the purpose of propagating the Orthodox Faith; and
- d. Ensure that necessary funds are provided for missionary activity within his Diocese.

ARTICLE IX - THE DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY

Section 1: Definition

The Diocesan Assembly is the highest legislative and administrative authority within the Diocese, and assists the Diocesan Bishop in its governance. The Assembly brings together the various elements of the Diocese to bear witness to her identity, unity, and mission.

Section 2: Composition

The Diocesan Assembly shall be composed of:

- a. The Diocesan Bishop;
- b. The Auxiliary Bishop(s);
- c. The superiors of Diocesan monasteries;

DPEP – There are no monasteries currently in the Diocese, only a parish associated with St. Tikhon's Monastery, a stavropegial institution under the omophorion of the Metropolitan of the OCA.

- d. The priests and deacons of each Parish, ex officio, and an equal number of lay delegates from each Parish, elected as provided in Section 7 of this Article;



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DPEP – The “active” priests and Deacons will be ex officio members of the Diocesan Assembly

For clarification purposes the following terms are addressed in ARTICLE XII, Section 4:

Active –the Rector, associate Priest and Deacon of a parish assigned by the Diocesan Hierarch and compensated by the parish for their care and administration of the parish.

Attached – Deacons, Priests, and/or retired clergy attending the parish with the Diocesan Hierarch’s blessing, but have no parochial responsibilities or authority.

- e. One lay delegate from each Parish not having a priest;
- f. The members of the Diocesan Council and the members of its Auditing Committee, if not otherwise qualified to attend;
- g. Two delegates, one priest or deacon and one layman, from the faculty and senior staff of each Diocesan theological institution, appointed by the appropriate authority of the institutions;

DPEP – The Diocese currently has no seminaries. St. Tikhon’s Seminary is a stavropegial institution under the omophorion of the Metropolitan of the OCA.

- h. Attached clergy, if accredited by the Diocesan Council, with the permission of the Diocesan Bishop, with the right to attend and to speak from the floor of the Assembly, but without the right to vote;
- i. Retired bishops and other clergy resident in the Diocese, if accredited by the Diocesan Council, with the permission of the Diocesan Bishop, with the right to attend and to speak from the floor of the Assembly, but without the right to vote;
- j. Members of special committees invited by the Diocesan Council to attend and participate in the discussions of the subject of their work; and
- k. Additional persons invited by the Diocesan Council with the permission of the Diocesan Bishop, to attend sessions of the Diocesan Assembly with or without the right to participate in the discussions, but without the right to vote.

Members of a Parish of the Diocese, having been accredited in a manner to be determined by the Diocesan Council, may attend the Diocesan Assembly as Observers and, with the agreement of the majority of the delegates, may be permitted to address the Assembly, but not to vote.

DPEP – For clarification, ex officio members have the same privileges as any other member, including the right to vote and make, or second, motions.

Section 3: Periodicity

- a. The Diocesan Assembly shall be convened at least once each calendar year, or as otherwise provided for in Diocesan Bylaws. The place of the meeting is to be determined by the previous Diocesan Assembly; however, in case of necessity, the Diocesan Council may change the place of meeting.



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- b. Special Diocesan Assemblies may be convoked by the Diocesan Bishop in consultation with the Diocesan Council, or by the Locum Tenens for the election of a Diocesan Bishop as specified in Article VIII, Section 7.

DPEP – The meeting is to be held in the month of January.

Section 4: Competence of the Diocesan Assembly

The following are within the competence of the Diocesan Assembly. The Diocesan Assembly shall:

- a. Consider and approve measures to strengthen the life of the Diocese and encourage the growth of her Parishes and faithful people in Orthodox Faith and piety through the establishment and maintenance of educational, philanthropic and other necessary institutions, organizations and programs;
- b. Establish means for securing revenue necessary to fulfill these aims, to fund the Diocesan administration, and to fulfill the Diocesan financial obligations to the Church as determined by the All-American Council;
- c. Receive reports on the operation and activities of the Diocesan Administration and Diocesan institutions, the Deaneries, the Auditing Committee, and organizations and programs;
- d. Authorize the Diocesan Council to acquire, encumber, or dispose of Diocesan properties;
- e. Approve the Diocesan budget and otherwise allocate and encumber Diocesan resources;
- f. Propose matters for consideration by the Metropolitan and Church Officers, the All-American Council, or the Metropolitan Council, as appropriate;
- g. In the event of a vacancy in the office of Diocesan Bishop, and constituted as a Special Assembly, nominate a candidate for that office to the Holy Synod, in accordance with Article VIII, Section 7.
- h. Elect the members of the Diocesan Council and Auditing Committee as provided in the Diocesan Bylaws;
- i. Elect Diocesan Representatives and alternates to the Metropolitan Council as provided in Article V, Section 2; and

Note: Article V, Section 2c states that the Metropolitan Council shall consist of..." Two representatives from each Diocese, one priest or deacon and one layperson, elected by the Diocesan Assembly unless otherwise provided for by Diocesan Bylaws"

DPEP – The Diocesan Assembly will elect members of the Metropolitan Council: one priest or deacon and one layperson.

- j. Cooperate in implementing decisions of the Holy Synod, the All-American Council, the Metropolitan Council, and other Church authorities on the Diocesan and parochial levels.

Section 5: Requirements for Representation at the Diocesan Assembly

Every Parish in the Diocese which has remitted all financial obligations determined by the All-American Council and all financial obligations determined by previous Diocesan Assemblies is entitled to representation as outlined in Section 2.d-e of this Article.

The Parish shall assume the expenses incurred by its delegates in attending the Assembly.



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DPEP – The Diocese will cover the expenses connected with the participation of the following, if not already parish delegates: Members of the Diocesan Council and Auditing Committees; representatives of the various departments or committees, and guests invited by the Diocesan Hierarchy.

Section 6: Reports

The Diocesan Council, acting with the approval of the Diocesan Bishop, shall determine the reports which are to be presented at the Diocesan Assembly and, if necessary, shall appoint the persons or committees to make such reports.

Section 7: Election and Accreditation of Delegates

The lay delegates of the Diocesan Assembly must meet the following requirements to be elected and accredited:

- a. Be elected by a Parish Assembly or by the Parish Council in accordance with the requirements and procedures established for such an election in Diocesan or Parish Bylaws;
- b. Be a Parishioner in accordance with Article XII, Section 5;
- c. The elected delegates shall be accredited to the Assembly in accord with procedures and documentation established by the Diocesan Authority; and

The Parish Priest shall submit the proper documentation to the Diocesan Authority. If the Parish or mission has no Parish Priest the District Dean shall oversee the election and submit the documentation. The delegates from a theological institution, if laymen, shall be accredited by the appropriate authority of the institution.

Section 8: Credentials Committee

A Credentials Committee, appointed by the Diocesan Council with the approval of the Diocesan Bishop, or the Locum Tenens in the case of a Special Diocesan Assembly, shall verify the credentials of all members of the Diocesan Assembly and of additional persons invited by the Diocesan Council.

DPEP – The approval will take place at the Diocesan Council meeting immediately preceding the Diocesan Assembly

Section 9: Divine Services

The order of liturgical services at the Diocesan Assembly shall be determined in advance by the Diocesan Bishop in consultation with the Diocesan Council.

Section 10: Agenda

The agenda for the Diocesan Assembly shall be fixed in advance by the Diocesan Council with the approval of the Diocesan Bishop, and shall be provided to all delegates at least three (3) weeks prior to the date set for the convening of the Assembly. The agenda may be changed by vote of the Assembly.

Section 11: Presiding Officers

- a. The presiding officer of the Diocesan Assembly shall be the Diocesan Bishop, or an Auxiliary Bishop or priest specifically appointed by the Diocesan Bishop.



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- b. Two vice-chairpersons, one priest or deacon and one layperson, shall be elected by the Diocesan Assembly and shall perform such functions as may be assigned to them by the presiding officer.

DPEP – The Diocesan Hierarchy will appoint the nominees and ask for confirmation by the Assembly.

Section 12: Secretariat

The Diocesan Assembly shall elect a Secretariat according to its needs.

DPEP – The Diocesan Hierarchy will appoint the nominees and ask for confirmation by the Assembly.

Section 13: Minutes

The minutes of the Assembly shall be prepared and signed by the Secretariat and submitted to the presiding officer for his written acceptance as to form and accuracy. Within a period of not more than sixty (60) days after the final adjournment of the Assembly, the minutes, approved by the presiding officer, shall be published and distributed to each delegate. The minutes shall be approved by the Diocesan Authority no later than the next Diocesan Assembly.

DPEP – Email, will be considered an acceptable delivery mechanism. Minutes will also be posted on the Diocesan website.

Section 14: Committees

The Diocesan Council shall establish such committees as may be necessary for the proper operation of the Assembly, and shall define their membership and responsibilities.

Section 15: Quorum

A majority of the members of the Diocesan Assembly who have been accredited and registered shall constitute a quorum.

DPEP - This implies that a majority of lay people must be there, as they are the “accredited” delegates.

Section 16: Voting

- a. As its first order of business, the Assembly shall adopt rules of procedure for the conduct of its business, unless otherwise provided for in the Diocesan Bylaws.
- b. All resolutions and other decisions of the Diocesan Assembly shall be approved by majority vote, unless otherwise required by the Diocesan Bylaws.

DPEP – Generally the votes will be counted based on oral response or hand-raising. A secret ballot may be called for by:

1. the Diocesan Hierarchy,
2. a majority of the Diocesan Council, or
3. a majority of voting members present at the Assembly.



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In the case of a secret ballot, one or more teams of three shall be appointed, with each team counting approximately 100 votes. At the end of their counting the results shall be tabulated by the presiding officer in the sight of all teams. Final counts shall be agreed upon and announced to the Assembly by the presiding officer.

Section 17: Approval by the Diocesan Bishop

No resolution or other action of the Diocesan Assembly shall be effective until it is approved by the Diocesan Bishop, or the Locum Tenens in the case of a Special Diocesan Assembly. Approval or disapproval shall in the normal course be announced before the adjournment of the Diocesan Assembly.

Section 18: Auditing Committee

The Auditing Committee, consisting of no fewer than three (3) members, shall be elected by the Diocesan Assembly. The members of the Diocesan Auditing Committee shall not be members of the Diocesan Council or be Diocesan Officers. Members of the Auditing Committee shall be members ex officio of the Diocesan Assembly. Their relevant professional experience, the terms of office, the method of their election, and their duties shall be as defined in Article X, Section 8, and in the Diocesan Bylaws.

DPEP ELECTIONS - The following procedure shall be followed:

At the beginning of the Assembly the Diocesan Hierarch will appoint two tellers to serve as the Nominating Committee for all offices. If a two-day Assembly is scheduled the nominations will take place on the first day and the elections on the second day; for a one-day election both activities will take place on that day.

Nominations will be made from the floor. Only those persons present at the Assembly, including observers and guests, who are members in good standing of the Diocese are eligible to hold office. Good standing signifies meeting the criteria for voting at the Assembly as described in these Statutes and Bylaws. If there is doubt concerning a member's standing the Diocesan Hierarch shall make a determination as to eligibility.

After nominations are closed the Nominating Committee will request brief biographies from each nominee. The Nominating Committee will compile and distribute all biographies prior to the election. Elections will take place in order as presented on the Agenda for the Assembly. All voting members at the Assembly (as described in Article IX, Section 2) will vote for the following offices for vacancies in the order shown:

At the 2025 Assembly - Clergy Metropolitan Council Representative and Lay Metropolitan Council Representative; Clergy "at-large" Diocesan Council Representative; Lay "at-large" Diocesan Council Representative, will be elected for a one-year term. All subsequent elections for this position will be three-year terms.



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At the 2025 Assembly - Diocesan Auditors, one for a one year term, one for a two year term and the third for a three-year term. In 2026 all elections will be for three-year terms. •

The term of office for all elected Metropolitan and Diocesan Council representatives shall be limited to two (2) sequential three-year terms.

Deanery Representatives to the Diocesan Council will be nominated and elected by a caucus. Only the members of a Deanery vote for their respective representatives. One Clergy Delegate and one Lay Delegate will be elected from each Deanery.

At the 2025 Diocesan Assembly all Deanery Clergy Representatives will be elected for three year terms and Lay representatives for two year terms. Beginning in 2026 all elected Diocesan Council positions will be filled for no more than two consecutive three year terms thus creating a healthy rotation of members, providing for continuity without disruption caused by all members being elected in the same year. After a one year sabbatical, one may be elected again.

ARTICLE X - THE DIOCESAN COUNCIL

Section 1: Definition

The Diocesan Council, normally meeting under the presidency of the Diocesan Bishop, is the permanent executive body of the Diocesan administration which exists for the purpose of implementing the decisions of the Diocesan Assembly and continues the work of the Assembly between its sessions.

Section 2: Composition

The Diocesan Council shall consist of:

- a. The Diocesan Bishop, or Locum Tenens, ex officio;
- b. Auxiliary Bishop(s);
- c. The Diocesan Officers, ex officio;
- d. The Diocesan Representatives to the Metropolitan Council, ex officio; and
- e. Additional members as determined by the Diocesan Bylaws.

The Diocesan Bylaws may provide for the appointment of non-voting members to the Council.

The Diocesan Bishop, or Locum Tenens, shall be the chairman of the Diocesan Council, but in his absence, an Auxiliary Bishop or a priest designated by the Diocesan Bishop, or Locum Tenens, may preside at a particular meeting of the Council.

The Diocesan Council shall elect such other officers as may be needed to carry out its functions, as provided in the Diocesan Bylaws.

- **DPEP – the term of office for a lay member of the diocesan council is 3 years. The term of office for Deanery Delegates will be three years.**



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Deans are ex-officio members of the Diocesan Council.

Section 3: Periodicity

- a. The Diocesan Council shall convene at least twice each calendar year.
- b. Extraordinary sessions of the Diocesan Council may be convened by the Diocesan Bishop, the Locum Tenens, or at the written request of at least one-half of the voting membership of the Council.

DPEP – Notification of Extraordinary Sessions must be given to all members of the Diocesan Council with at least 48-hours notice.

Section 4: Terms of Office and Vacancies in Office

Terms of office and the means of filling vacancies on the Diocesan Council shall be as provided in the Diocesan Bylaws.

DPEP – the term of office for lay members of the Diocesan Council and for Deanery delegates is 3 years. Vacancies in the Diocesan Council shall be filled by the Diocesan Bishop in consultation with the Diocesan Council, pending the convening of the next Diocesan Assembly.

Section 5: Quorum and Voting

- a. The Diocesan Bishop, or Locum Tenens, or another presiding officer designated by him, plus one-half of the Voting Members of the Diocesan Council shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of business.
- b. Decisions of the Diocesan Council shall be by majority vote of the members present and voting unless otherwise provided in the Diocesan Bylaws.

DPEP – Unless consensus is reached the decision shall be tabled and additional data gathered for decision making. The Diocesan Hierarch may resolve the issue through proclamation if timeliness deems this action necessary.

- c. All decisions of the Diocesan Council shall become effective upon approval by the Diocesan Bishop, or Locum Tenens.

DPEP – At any time the Diocesan Hierarch can amend his decision for approval or disapproval of any decision, but he must announce this change during opening remarks of the next Diocesan Council meeting and his final decision must be recorded in the minutes.

Section 6: Competence

The following matters are within the competence of the Diocesan Council. The Diocesan Council shall:

- a. Consider and act on matters affecting the Parishes and institutions of the Diocese in accordance with the directives of the Diocesan Bishop and the decisions of the Diocesan Assembly;
- b. Consider matters submitted by the Diocesan Bishop and make recommendations regarding his further action;



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- c. Implement the decisions of the Diocesan Assembly;
- d. Cooperate in implementation on the Diocesan and parochial levels of the decisions of the Holy Synod, the All-American Council, the Metropolitan Council, and other Church authorities;
- e. Oversee Diocesan Officers and administrative bodies as provided in the Diocesan Bylaws, and provide for the employment of such personnel as necessary for the efficient functioning of the Diocesan administration;
- f. Allocate Diocesan funds for the general benefit of the Diocese, including, as necessary, the allocation of Diocesan funds to Parishes or institutions of the Diocese;
- g. Supervise the collection of regular financial obligations fixed by the Diocesan Assembly, and initiate and oversee special fund-raising projects;
- h. Examine and verify the financial records and reports, including the reports of the Auditing Committee;
- i. Oversee the management of all Diocesan investments and property, real and personal; and supervise and approve the acquisition, encumbrance and disposition of the same;
- j. Attend to legal matters affecting the interests and welfare of the Diocese;
- k. Advise the Diocesan Bishop on the establishment of Parishes and deaneries;
- l. Render a final decision regarding the authenticity of the minutes of the Diocesan Assembly should a question arise concerning their accuracy;
- m. Provide for the establishment and maintenance of institutions or organizations of philanthropy and education within the Diocese;
- n. Oversee preparation for the Diocesan Assembly; and
- o. Maintain the religious, cultural, and historical patrimony of the Diocese, its Parishes, and institutions.

DPEP – Receive reports from the Deans on the financial audit status of the parishes under their supervision

Section 7: The Diocesan Officers

The Diocesan Bishop shall appoint a Chancellor and a Treasurer, who shall perform such duties as assigned to them by the Diocesan Bishop, the Diocesan Assembly, and the Diocesan Council. The Diocesan Bishop shall appoint such other officers as may be provided for in the Diocesan Bylaws to ensure the efficient operation of the Diocesan Administration. The Diocesan Officers work under the direct supervision of the Bishop and report to the Diocesan Council of which they are ex officio members.

The Diocesan Officers shall implement the decisions of the Diocesan Council under the supervision of the Diocesan Bishop.

The Diocesan Officers shall assure the proper maintenance of both the active and archival records of the Diocese and assist Parishes and institutions of the Diocese in the proper maintenance of their own active and archival records.

When the office of the Diocesan Bishop is vacant, the Chancellor shall safeguard the particular patrimony of the Diocese until a new Diocesan Bishop is elected.



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DPEP - The Diocesan Chancery shall function in order to implement the decisions of the Diocesan Council under the management of the Diocesan Bishop. The term Chancery refers to the administrative and housekeeping staff required for operation of the Diocesan Center, Diocesan Hierarch's residence and to support the Diocesan Hierarch's administrative requirements. These may include, but are not limited to the following positions: Chancellor, Treasurer, and Secretary. Each of these appointments is for a term of three years, except for the initial appointments which will be staggered so that future changes will preserve administrative continuity. Two successive terms is normative for term limits, but the Diocesan Hierarch may reappoint as he sees fit. Specific responsibilities of each position will be determined by the Diocesan Hierarch. The Diocesan Council will budget financial compensation, if any, for these positions on an annual basis.

Section 8: Auditing Committee

The Auditing Committee, consisting of three persons with relevant professional experience, shall be elected by the Diocesan Assembly. The Auditing Committee shall audit annually the accounts of the Diocesan administration with respect to all Diocesan funds and the funds of all Diocesan institutions. The Auditing Committee shall report its findings to the Diocesan Council and the Diocesan Assembly. Members of the Auditing Committee may attend sessions of the Diocesan Council to make its report. Vacancies in the Auditing Committee shall be filled by the Diocesan Bishop in consultation with the Diocesan Council, pending the convening of the next Diocesan Assembly. Matters relating to terms of office, method of election, and further duties shall be as defined in the Diocesan Bylaws.

ARTICLE XI - THE DEANERY

Section 1: Definition

A Deanery is a specified administrative district, within the boundaries of a Diocese, usually encompassing Parishes in a defined geographical area, and established by the Diocesan Bishop in consultation with the Diocesan Council.

DPEP – Specific boundaries and parishes assigned to each deanery are located in Appendix A, which may be changed by the Diocesan Hierarch as needed.

Section 2: The District Dean

The District Dean is a priest who heads a deanery. He assists the Diocesan Bishop in the administration of the Deanery.

The District Dean shall be appointed by the Diocesan Bishop from among the Parish Priests of the Deanery in consultation with Deanery clergy or as provided for in the Diocesan Bylaws.

DPEP – The Dean serves at the discretion of the Diocesan Hierarch and can be removed at any time with or without cause. Two successive terms of three years is considered normative, but a dean may be reappointed as needed.

Section 3: Competence of the District Dean

The following are within the competence of the District Dean. The District Dean shall:



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- a. Oversee Deanery matters and the activities of its clergy;
- b. Assist the Diocesan Bishop by giving direction and fraternal counsel to deanery clergy in areas of pastoral concern in a private and circumspect manner, whenever their personal conduct or manner of discharging their duties indicates the need for such counsel or action;
- c. Receive and investigate complaints against clergy and laity and against the decisions of Parish bodies and submit his report and recommendations to the Diocesan Bishop;
- d. Participate in Parish meetings at the direction of the Diocesan Bishop;
- e. Participate in Parish meetings at the request of the Parish Priest or the Parish Council with the permission of the Diocesan Bishop;
- f. Provide for services during temporary absence of Parish Clergy with the consent of the Diocesan Bishop;
- g. Assist the Diocesan Bishop in the planning and organization of new Parishes within the Deanery;
- h. Convene periodic meetings of Deanery clergy and submit the minutes of the meetings to the Diocesan Bishop; and
- i. Submit an annual report on the Deanery to the Diocesan Bishop and the Diocesan Assembly.

The District Dean shall fulfill other duties entrusted to him by the Diocesan Bishop.

DPEP – Adds the following responsibilities

- j. **Ensuring compliance with all Diocesan reporting requirements and assessment submission.**
- k. **Receive audit procedures and results on an annual basis from all parishes under their supervision and summarize the results for presentation to the Diocesan Council.**

ARTICLE XII – THE PARISH

Section 1: Definition

- a. The Parish is a local Orthodox Eucharistic community canonically established by and subject to the authority of the Diocesan Bishop. For purposes of the Statute, unless otherwise specified, the term Parish refers to Parishes, Missions, Provisional Missions, and Mission Stations.
- b. The organization and administration of a Parish are subject to the Statute, the Statute or Bylaws of the Diocese, and the Parish Bylaws approved by the Diocesan Authority. The Orthodox Church in general and The Orthodox Church in America in particular are hierarchical in structure.

DPEP –Any dispute arising due to a perceived conflict between the OCA Statutes and Diocesan Statutes shall be resolved by the Diocesan Hierarchy. All Parishes are required by the IRS to have Bylaws.

- c. A Chapel is a unique Orthodox Eucharistic community canonically established by and subject to the authority of the Diocesan Bishop. Although a Chapel is not a Parish, the Statute and this Article in particular apply to Chapels insofar as they are appropriate to their situation.



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Section 2: The Diocesan Bishop and the Parish

- a. The Bishop is the spiritual leader of all Parishes within his Diocese. In consultation with the Diocesan Council, he shall establish, territorially define, consolidate with another Parish, or suppress a Parish. He appoints Parish Clergy, maintaining a relationship with them that is at once hierarchical and conciliar, marked by obedience and collaboration. He has the obligation and right of visitation to the Parish and receives and approves regular reports on Parish life. In case of conflict and disorder within the Parish, he takes all necessary measures to resolve them consistent with the Sacred Canons and the Statute.
- b. For the establishment of a Parish, a local group of faithful must demonstrate that it is stable and has the potential to become self-supporting and self-sustaining, and that it agrees that its corporate charter and Bylaws will be consistent with canonical requirements and the Statute. No corporate charter or Bylaws of any Parish shall be effective unless approved by the Diocesan Authority.
- c. When the Bishop deems it appropriate, in consultation with the local group of faithful, he dedicates the new Parish to a feast day or places it under the protection of a patron saint.
- d. Additional signs of the canonical status of the Parish and the sacramental communion that exists between it and the Bishop are the Holy Antimension given by the Bishop and the commemoration of the Bishop during liturgical services.

Section 3: The Parish Priest

- a. The Parish Priest, also referred to as rector or priest-in-charge, by virtue of his ordination and canonical appointment, serves as the spiritual father and teacher of that portion of the flock of Christ entrusted to him, the first among the Parish Clergy, and presides over liturgical worship in accordance with the tradition and the norms of the Church.
- b. By virtue of the authority delegated to him at his appointment by the Diocesan Bishop, the Parish Priest, as head of the Parish, shall:
 - i. Teach, sanctify, and edify the faithful entrusted to his spiritual care with no partiality;
 - ii. Provide for the administration of the sacraments and the celebration of all liturgical services;
 - iii. Ensure that all educational, philanthropic, social, and cultural activities within the Parish or of the Parish are consistent with the mission of the Church;
 - iv. Head and administer the Parish in a manner consistent with the provisions of the Statute, the governing documents of the Diocese and Parish, and the directives of the Diocesan Authority in cooperation with the Parish Council. 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 the appropriate Parish bodies, so that always and everywhere there may be mutual trust, cooperation, unity, and love;
 - v. Normally preside over the Parish Assembly and Parish Council, except in cases when the Bishop is present or when the Bishop's delegate is present for this purpose;
 - vi. Head the Parish office and be entrusted with the care, custody, and maintenance of sacramental and administrative records, inventories, and the official Parish seal; and



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- vii. Represent the Parish before local civil and judicial authorities and other third parties, either personally or through his delegate.
- c. The Parish shall compensate the Parish Priest. His compensation shall be determined according to established Diocesan procedures and norms. His compensation is to be clearly agreed upon prior to his appointment.

DPEP: The priest is to receive annual cost of living increases and merit raises as deemed appropriate by the Parish Council.

- d. The Parish Priest possesses the rights and exercises the responsibilities stipulated by the Sacred Canons, the Statute, and the directives of the Holy Synod and the Diocesan Authority.
- e. The Parish Priest cannot vacate his Parish, change his status, or seek to transfer to another Parish or Diocese without the permission of the Diocesan Bishop.

DPEP – Although US Tax code requires a designation of “employee” or “contractor” it is important to note that the Rector is neither an employee nor a contractor of the parish, but is the father, pastor and leader of the parish under the sole authority of the Diocesan Hierarchy.

Section 4: Other Parish Clergy

- a. An Associates Priest is a Priest who has been appointed to a Parish by the Diocesan Bishop, receives compensation from the Parish, and carries out ministries within the Parish as directed by the Parish Priest in consultation with the Parish Council. His role in the governance of the Parish is determined by the established Diocesan procedures and norms.
- b. An Assigned Deacon is a Deacon who has been appointed by the Bishop to service within a Parish, receives compensation from the Parish, and carries out ministries within the Parish as directed by the Parish Priest in consultation with the Parish Council. His role in the governance of the Parish is determined by the established Diocesan procedures and norms.
- c. Attached clergy are priests or deacons who are canonically attached to a Parish by the Bishop without necessary compensation from the Parish and without involvement in Parish governance.
- d. Like the Parish Priest, all Parish Clergy, including those in minor orders, possess the rights and exercise the responsibilities stipulated for their order by the Sacred Canons, the Statute, and the directives of the Holy Synod and the Diocesan Authority.
- e. Parish Clergy cannot vacate the Parish to which they are assigned or attached, change their status, or seek to transfer to another Parish or Diocese without the permission of the Diocesan Bishop.

Section 5: Parishioner

- a. A Parishioner is one who, by virtue of Baptism and Chrismation, is a member of the Body of Christ and incorporated into a local Parish community as a Parish member.
- b. A Parishioner has a reasonable expectation for pastoral care in accordance with the Orthodox tradition. He or she enjoys full benefits of participation in Parish life. He or she has the duty to sustain, strengthen and witness to the Orthodox Faith; to live according to



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the teaching of the Church; to participate in the religious services; to partake of the Holy Sacraments; to fulfill acts of Christian mercy; to support and help the Church.

- c. Parish membership may be suspended or revoked by the Parish Priest or the Diocesan Bishop for due cause, such as:
 - i. Open rejection of the Orthodox Faith;
 - ii. Public and open defamation of, defiance of, or rebellion against ecclesiastical authority;
 - iii. Grave moral transgression; or
 - iv. Formal association with a non-Orthodox religious body.
- d. A Voting Member of the Parish is a Parishioner who:
 - i. Is at least eighteen years of age;
 - ii. Receives the Sacrament of Confession at least once a year in the Parish or, with the permission of the Parish Priest, elsewhere;
 - iii. Receives Holy Communion at least once a year in the Parish;
 - iv. Has been a Parishioner for a period of time fixed by the Diocesan Authority; and
 - v. Fulfills financial obligations as established by the All-American Councils, Diocesan Assemblies, and the Parish.

Voting Membership shall be denied if these criteria are not met.

- e. A Voting Member has accepted the right, privilege, and responsibility to vote in Parish Assemblies. A Voting Member may be considered for election to office in appropriate Parish bodies. A Voting Member is eligible for election as a delegate to the Diocesan Assembly and the All-American Council.

DPEP: Serving on parish bodies is not a right, but a privilege. Nominees for Parish Council or other Church bodies should be for persons who go beyond the minimum requirements above and also possess the ability to work well with other and are non-contentious.

Section 6: Financial Obligation

Each year, the Parish shall remit to the Diocesan Treasurer its minimum financial support to the Diocese and through it to The Orthodox Church in America as determined by the All-American Council and in conformity with local civil law.

DPEP – the timeliness of remission of financial support and census information shall be determined on a parish by parish basis by the Diocesan Treasurer with permission of the Bishop.

Section 7: The Parish Assembly

- a. The Parish Assembly, sometimes known as the Parish Meeting, meets annually to consider matters pertaining to the life of the Parish and to conduct necessary elections relating to the Parish as a whole. The Parish Assembly is comprised of the Voting Members of the Parish, and such additional persons as shall be provided for by Diocesan and Parish Bylaws, established procedures and norms, normally meeting under the presidency of the Parish Priest, or the Diocesan Bishop or the Bishop's delegate. The Parish Priest together with the Parish Council may invite additional persons with or without the right to speak but without the right to vote.
- b. The Parish Priest together with the Parish Council, or the Diocesan Bishop, may call a special Parish Assembly to consider matters of specific concern.



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- c. Procedures for the call, conduct, and recording of the annual and any special Parish Assemblies shall be provided by the Diocesan and Parish Bylaws.
- d. The following matters are within the competence of the Parish Assembly. The Parish Assembly shall:
 - i. Hear and approve annual or special reports by committees and Parish organizations;
 - ii. Consider and decide on matters concerning the purchase, improvement, or sale of real property; investment of Parish funds (other than in savings accounts); and the transfer of any interest in or change of ownership and the incurring of indebtedness or otherwise encumbering Parish funds or property, subject to the approval of the Diocesan Authority;
 - iii. Approve the annual operating budget submitted by the Parish Council;
 - iv. Provide for the adoption and amendment of Parish Bylaws, if this is not otherwise provided for; and
 - v. Elect members of the Parish Council, the auditing committee, and the lay delegates to the Diocesan Assembly and to the All-American Council, if the latter is to meet during that current year. Please see the note below regarding term limits and exclusions of close relatives serving simultaneously.²
- e. In case the Parish Priest disagrees with one or more decisions of the Parish Assembly, his reasoned opinion shall be recorded in the minutes and the matter submitted to the Bishop. So also, if an officer of the Parish Council disagrees with one or more decisions of the Parish Assembly, his or her motivated opinion shall be recorded in the minutes and the matter submitted to the Bishop. The manner in which further dissent is recorded and possibly transmitted to the Bishop shall be dealt with by Diocesan and Parish Bylaws and established procedures and norms.
- f. No Parish Assembly, either annual or special, shall take any action which is contrary to or not in accord with the Statute. Should there be any such conflict, the Statute shall prevail.

² The parishes of our Diocese, as well as others that are maintaining their numbers or showing growth embrace healthy changes in parish leadership, term limits, rotation of positions, and limitations on immediate family serving concurrently. When one person serves too long on the parish council, especially as council chair or treasurer it inevitably undermines healthy parishes, healthy parish councils, and restricts healthy dialogue beneficial to parish health and growth. Those who serve extended periods often fall prey to the notion that his or her opinion carries more weight than anyone else's. The parish priest is the only permanent member of the parish council.

Therefore, as you prepare for your Annual Meetings, please inform your Nominating Committee that no one may be reelected to parish council who has been on the council for more than 6 (six) consecutive years or 20 (twenty) years total. (Parish council members need a sabbatical from administrative responsibilities, so that they may simply come and pray.) Any parish that would not have 50% of their council remaining, may rotate off 1/3 of their members each of the coming three years. Parishes which have a rotation of officers and term limits are healthier than those which lack new faces on the council. We need to know when to let the younger generation assume positions of leadership. As you will remember from our parish council workshop with Church Mutual, on "Officers and Directors Coverage," TERM LIMITS and ROTATION OF OFFICERS is considered "Best Practices."

Additionally, immediate family members and no more than two blood relatives may serve simultaneously on parish council. All those nominated must be in good standing with the Church through regular Confession and Communion, as determined by the Rector prior to the Annual Meeting. Finally, according to the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America and the Diocesan Bylaws, no one may simultaneously hold two positions on the parish council. Hopefully, as leadership changes, there will be continuity with healthy practices already in place and new ideas welcomed, the parishes will discover opportunities for growth and health. Any exception to this policy must be sent in writing to the Diocesan Bishop with an explanation of the need for an exception.



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Should there be a question whether an action of a Parish Assembly is valid or lawful under the Statute, the issue shall be submitted to the Diocesan Authority for determination.

Section 8: The Parish Council

- a. The Parish Council is the executive body that assists the Parish Priest in administration of the Parish and normally meets under his presidency. The Parish Council is comprised of the Parish Priest, ex officio, and members elected by the Parish Assembly and any ex officio and appointed members as may be provided for by Diocesan or Parish Bylaws. The Parish Council seeks to foster the spiritual and material welfare of the Parish.
- b. The number of members of the Parish Council and their terms of office shall be determined by Diocesan and Parish Bylaws. The mode of election, terms of office, titles, and duties of Parish Council officers shall also be determined by Diocesan and Parish Bylaws. All members of the Parish Council shall be installed by the Parish Priest according to Diocesan procedures and norms.
- c. Periodicity of meetings and procedures for the normal conduct of business for the regular and special Parish Council meetings shall be provided by the Diocesan and Parish Bylaws.
- d. The following matters are within the competence of the Parish Council. The Parish Council shall:
 - i. Exercise fiduciary responsibility for the Parish;
 - ii. Implement within its competence the decisions of the Parish Assembly, the Diocesan Authority, and the All-American Council;
 - iii. Formulate, implement, and direct stewardship programs;
 - iv. Oversee implementation of the budget adopted by the Parish Assembly;
 - v. Authorize any fundraising activity within the Parish;
 - vi. Manage, inventory, and maintain Parish properties, both real and personal;
 - vii. Regulate use of Parish facilities;
 - viii. Maintain and verify the official roster of the Parish's general and voting membership;
 - ix. Oversee and regularly receive reports from Parish ministries and organizations;
 - x. Prepare reports on aspects of Parish life within its competence for the annual Parish Assembly;
 - xi. Propose an annual budget for consideration at the annual Parish Assembly; and
 - xii. Set a date and propose an agenda for Parish Assemblies.
- e. No regular or special meeting of the Parish Council shall be held without the knowledge and blessing of the Parish Priest. If the Parish Priest is unable to preside over a meeting of the Parish Council, the senior elected officer of the Parish Council shall preside with the blessing of the Parish Priest or the Bishop. In case the office of Parish Priest is vacant, until the appointment of the new Parish Priest, the senior elected officer of the Parish Council shall preside, unless the Bishop or his delegate is present.
- f. The official minutes of all meetings of the Parish Council shall, in accordance with Diocesan or Parish Bylaws, be approved, signed, properly maintained, and made available as appropriate.
- g. In case the Parish Priest disagrees with one or more decisions of the Parish Council, his reasoned opinion shall be recorded in the minutes and the matter referred to the Diocesan Authority.

Section 9: Parish Property



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- a. The Parish Corporation holds legal title to all Parish property, assets, and funds. In administering them, the Parishioners and the officers elected by them must always remember the religious nature, purposes, and goal of the Parish and act as trustees of such property dedicated to the service of God and the use of the Church.
- b. All Parish property, assets and funds are and shall be owned and held by the Parish or Parish Corporation in trust for the use, purpose, and benefit of the Diocese of The Orthodox Church in America of which it is a part. This provision shall not limit the authority of the Parish or Parish Corporation in its administration of such property, assets, and funds in accord with the faith, governance, and discipline of The Orthodox Church in America.
- c. In the event the Diocese shall be dissolved or attempt to disaffiliate from The Orthodox Church in America in a disorderly manner, all Parish property, assets and funds of such Diocese are and shall remain subject to the use, purpose, and benefit of The Orthodox Church in America.
- d. If the Parish is canonically suppressed or otherwise ceases to exist, its real and personal property shall be disposed of in accord with Section 9, b, above. In all cases, the sacred and untouchable items, viz. the Holy Antimension, the Tabernacle, and the Sacred Vessels, as well as all Parish records, shall be surrendered to the Diocesan Bishop or his designee.

ARTICLE XIII – MONASTICISM

DPEP – Currently there are no monasteries within the boundaries of the Diocese, except for St. Tikhon’s Monastery, which is a stavropegial institution. Should a monastery be established it will be governed based upon Article XIII of the Statutes of the OCA

ARTICLE XIV – STAVROPEGIAL INSTITUTIONS

DPEP – St. Tikhon’s Monastery and St. Tikhon’s Seminary, are stavropegial institutions located within the Diocese and are governed based upon Article XIV of the Statutes of the OCA.

ARTICLE XV – ECCLESIASTICAL COURTS

DPEP –The Ecclesiastical Courts within the Diocese will be governed by Article XV of the Statutes of the OCA. The following sections from Article XV are specifically applicable:

Section 3: The Diocesan Court

The Diocesan Court shall be established by the Diocesan Bishop and shall be the Court of first instance in all matters concerning clergy and laity of the Diocese or otherwise under the authority of the Diocesan Bishop.

Section 4: Competence of the Diocesan Court

The Diocesan Court shall be competent to adjudicate cases involving allegations of unorthodox belief or teaching, breaches of canonical or moral discipline, issues relating to



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marriage, disputes between individuals, administration of Parish and other Diocesan institutions, and other matters involving good Church order.

ARTICLE XVI – NATIONAL GROUPS

DPEP –National groups within the Diocese will be governed by Article XVI of the Statutes of the OCA.

ARTICLE XVII – AMENDMENTS

DPEP - Amendments to the Statutes of the OCA will be governed by Article XVII of the Statutes of the OCA. Diocesan Bylaws will be reviewed and/or modified within six months of any amendments to the Statutes of the OCA to ensure compliance with any additions, deletions, or modifications.

DPEP – The Diocesan Bylaws can be amended by the Diocesan Hierarch at any time, but he must announce the amendment(s) during opening remarks of the next Diocesan Council meeting and his final decision must be recorded in the minutes. All amendments must be in accordance with the governing articles within the Statutes of the OCA.

ARTICLE XVIII – EFFECTIVE DATE

DPEP – The effective date of the Statutes of the OCA upon which these Bylaws are based is November 1, 2015. These Bylaws shall be effective upon the approval of the Diocesan Authority as defined in Article VII, Section I of these Bylaws.



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Appendix A – Parish listing

Frackville Deanery

[Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church](#)

Saint Clair, Pennsylvania

[Christ the Saviour Church](#)

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

www.christthesaviourhbg.org

[Gettysburg Mission](#)

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

[Holy Apostles Mission](#)

Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania

www.holyapostleschurch.org

[Holy Ascension Church](#)

Frackville, Pennsylvania

www.haoca.org

[SS. Peter and Paul Church](#)

Minersville, Pennsylvania

[St. Herman of Alaska Church](#)

Shillington, Pennsylvania

[St. Mary Church](#)

Coaldale, Pennsylvania

[St. Michael Church](#)

Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania

Philadelphia Deanery



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[Assumption of the Holy Virgin Church](#)

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

www.holyassumptionphilly.org

[Holy Trinity Church](#)

Pottstown, Pennsylvania

www.htoca.org

[St. Herman of Alaska Church](#)

Gradyville, Pennsylvania

sthermansoca.org

[St. Mark Church](#)

Wrightstown, Bucks County, Pennsylvania

www.stmarksoca.org

[St. Michael the Archangel Church](#)

Wilmington, Delaware

www.stmichael-delaware-oca.org

[St. Nicholas Church](#)

Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

www.stnicholasoca.org

[St. Nicholas Church](#)

Coatesville, Pennsylvania

[St. Nicholas Church](#)

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

www.stnicholaseoc.org

[St. Stephen Cathedral](#)

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

www.ststephenscathedral.org

[Theotokos of the Life Giving Stream](#)

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



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Wilkes-Barre Deanery

All Saints Church

Olyphant, Pennsylvania

www.allsaintsolyphant.org

Elevation of the Holy Cross Church

Williamsport, Pennsylvania

www.holycrosswilliamsport.org

Holy Annunciation Church

Berwick, Pennsylvania

orthodoxberwick.org

Holy Resurrection Cathedral

Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

Holy Trinity Church

Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania

www.holytrinitypoconos.org/

Holy Trinity Church

Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

SS. Peter and Paul Church

Uniondale, Pennsylvania

St. Basil Church

Simpson, Pennsylvania

stbasilsimpson.org

St. John the Baptist Church

Dundaff, Pennsylvania

St. John the Baptist Church

Nanticoke, Pennsylvania

www.stjohnsnanticoke.org

St. John the Baptist Church

Edwardsville, Pennsylvania

sjboca.com



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St. Michael Church

Old Forge, Pennsylvania

www.stmof.org

St. Michael Church

Jermyn, Pennsylvania

www.stmichaeljermyn.org

St. Nicholas Church

Olyphant, Pennsylvania

stnicholasolyphant.tripod.com

St. Vladimir Church

Lopez, Pennsylvania