



# **2022 Clergy Laity Assembly (Virtual)**

## **“Equipped: Building Up the Body of Christ” Ephesians 4:12**

### ***March 18-19, 2022***

### **Minutes**

#### **Friday, March 18, 2022**

##### **Welcome**

**His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos**

His Eminence welcomed everyone to the Assembly and expressed his appreciation to everyone for taking the time to participate. He then offered an opening prayer.

##### **Appointment of Presiding Officer**

**His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos**

His Eminence appointed Deacon Justin Bosl to be the Presiding Officer of the Assembly.

##### **Archpastoral Greeting**

**His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros**

Metropolitan Gerasimos introduced a video message from the Archbishop. The Archbishop expressed his joy for being able to offer a message. He applauded the theme of the assembly, and then shared his vision for the next 100 years of the Archdiocese, stating that education about what it means to be an Orthodox Christian holds the key. Quoting St. Paul, His Eminence shared that we need to equip the saints for the edification of the body of Christ, until everyone arrives at the unity of the faith and unity of the knowledge of the son of God. Then we will have a perfected humanity. Living in a complex society with such short attention spans, the Church has a sacred responsibility to ensure the future of the Church.

##### **Featured Presentations**

Deacon Justin Bosl introduced all three speakers and Fr. Tom Zaferes as moderator.

##### **Effective Christian Ministry**

**Steven Christoforou**

Steven Christoforou expressed his love for the theme of the Assembly, which reflects his work in understanding what it means to help people attain the full stature of the Church; to form faithful disciples of Christ; to equip people to be faithful Orthodox Christians at this particular time in history. This is a challenge as statistics show Christianity is on a decline. Up to 64 percent of young Orthodox Christians fall away from the Church. Steve believes one reason this is

happening is because the Church may be simply institutionalizing our young people, as opposed to helping them develop a life in Christ. Attachment Theory may also help us understand young people's connection to the Church. Meaning, when young people reaches approximately 18 years old and begin to enter the real world, perhaps their attachment to the Church is an insecure one as their needs are not being met. Maybe the Church has been giving something to its youth in their younger years, but perhaps it is not giving enough to these same youth when they get older. The Effective Christian Ministry Program was created to help churches and ministry leaders to meet the top 5 needs of our young people and faithful. Steve shared the overall premises of this program and then offered an 50% discount code to anyone that would like to learn more about the program by purchasing it at [www.effectivechristianministry.org](http://www.effectivechristianministry.org).

### **When God Calls, God Equips**

**Dr. Eve Tibbs**

Dr. Eve Tibbs began her presentation by sharing a personal story of how she and her husband Steve, at very young ages, committed their lives to God. And how as soon as they made themselves available to their church, they were invited to teach in the Church School. Dr. Eve asked the attendees who invited them to be involved at their respective churches? And to consider that while perhaps it was an individual that asked them, maybe the idea really came from God. If we can think like this, then ministry then becomes an honor to work in the house of God. God sends us the gift of volunteers, but leaders need to provide direction, and training. God calls people to serve Him that have a heart and willingness to do so. We serve Christ by serving others. This is the How and Who of ministry. But what is the Why of ministry? Why do we do what we do for our parishes? The answer is that as followers of Jesus Christ we were created to serve, and therefore we need to serve. If we understand that we have all been called by God to serve, it helps us better understand "struggles" when we serve. We also need to consider the Holy Spirit's guidance when serving. The same Holy Spirit that guided St. Peter at Pentecost also guides us today! Mystagogy means that we are being guided by God to the Truth. If we are called to serve, do we need to be trained? Yes. Every gift from God comes with a task. We need to learn how to serve most effectively. With God's help, little by little, we can become more effective. How - God has called each of us. Why - We need to serve God. How - The Holy Spirit has promised to lead us.

### **To Lead**

**Steve Tibbs**

Steve Tibbs shared some thoughts on what it means to be an effective Christian leader from working with many of our parishes. Everyone that is a servant is a leader. Leaders start with being a servant. If you are a teacher, you are a leader to the students. Everyone that serves in a parish is a leader. Steve's favorite definition of a parish leader is to be a "Loving Leader", inspired by I Corinthians 13: 4-7. When preparing to be a leader, one should prepare the self, the team, and think how will the ministry connect with the parish. There are characteristics of people that are ready to serve. They love Christ and His Church, they live the liturgical life, they are life-long Orthodox learners, and they seek first to serve. A ministry team should; understand and respect the priest's role; work in accord with the priest; have no ego; and seek conciliarity. A ministry also needs to understand its "why"; should constantly communicate what it does; should demonstrate accountability and it should establish priorities. Steve has created a model for leader attributes. The base of the pyramid is Christian commitment. The middle level is servant

leadership. The top but smallest level are some business skills that can be brought into the picture to help get some things done. However, business skills cannot form the base of a Christian leader.

Fr. Tom Zeferes moderated the question and answer session.

### **Closing Thoughts**

**Rev. Tom Zaferes**

There were many good questions and discussions. Then Fr. Tom Zeferes summed up the theme of the presentations. He stated the answer to many of the questions raised is Jesus Christ. Fr. Tom doesn't believe that he was ever "called" to the priesthood but that he was politely "shoved". God works in mysterious ways, and we must be guided by the Holy Spirit. St. Paul sees the Holy Spirit on the road to Arameas but he doesn't preach right away. He goes and studies. Then he still doesn't preach. He goes to Jerusalem to be blessed by James. Then he starts to preach. We need to be trained and equipped to teach the Gospel. In order to pass the light, you need to have the light. It's not rocket science but it's hard. Are we willing to do the work to be filled with the light? This is what makes all of this work. St. Paul said he is a prisoner of the Lord. This is commitment. We have the Holy Spirit from our baptism but we need to do the work to bring it out. We must walk by the Spirit. We are called to be lights to the world. The Sermon on the Mount is our constitution that tells us how to live. Matthew has told us who we are and what we are supposed to do. We are the light of the world. We need to let our light shine and let our works be seen. We need to be united in Christ. This is what the liturgy is all about. This needs to be experienced. We are all given some gifts. Are we going to use them or bury them? We need to develop our gifts. How many of us use our gifts? We can use other people around us to help us develop our gifts. Everything we do is for the ministry of Jesus Christ. We are the saints. The work of ministry is the work of Jesus Christ. You want to reach out to the people around you? Be Jesus Christ. Do the work of Jesus Christ!

### **Closing Remarks and Benediction**

**His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos**

His Eminence thanked the presenters for their very educational and inspirational presentations today. He hoped that everyone will take what they learned today and bring these lessons to their home parishes. His Eminence offered a closing prayer.

### **Saturday, March 19, 2022**

### **Opening Prayer Service**

**His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos**

His Eminence was assisted by Fr. Peter Salmas and Fr. Constantine Trumpower.

### **Keynote Address**

**His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos**

His Eminence's video message was played. His Eminence thanked everyone who is participating to help build up the Body of Christ. His Eminence asked everyone to remember the victims of the war in Ukraine. The Archdiocese celebrates 100 years this year, and is an opportunity to think

about our past and future. The Archdiocese is reviewing its charter. The new charter should built on the strengths of the old charter and it should keep in mind the volunteerism at the parish level, who would like to have a voice in the administration of Church. It is important to give a voice to our younger people. The charter should reflect their needs and desires as well. The upcoming Archdiocese Congress will be the first one since 2018. It will be the first one for our Archbishop. The Congress will have the opportunity to visit St. Nicholas Shrine at Ground Zero. His All Holiness's recent visit reinforced our bond to the Patriarchate. The theme of the Assembly from St. Paul focuses on building up the Church. Everyone has different roles to play but everyone shares the responsibility. Many faithful are not returning to the Church since the pandemic. This is challenge we all need to respond to. Sometimes we think better advertising will bring people to the Church, but we need to reinvigorate our parishes as places of prayer, service, the love of neighbor, fellowship, and centers for learning the faith. The Church is a place where we can learn what it means to be loved by God, and places where we can share this knowledge. We want the Holy Spirit to be alive in our faithful. This is how we build up each member of the Church. We need all faithful to be involved in the life of the Church, especially our younger people. We are not an immigrant Church. We are in our 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> generation. We have distinctiveness as individuals and communities, but we are all one Church and one Body of Christ. Thinking about the next 100 years, we need to think of a united local Church that expresses the truth of the Gospel to the world. We need to communicate the Gospel that speaks to the mind and heart of each generation. This is our work and challenge, to build up the Body of Christ for our children and each generation to come.

#### **California's AB506 and Youth Protection Update**

**Deacon Justin Bosl**

Deacon Justin presented on this new legislature in California. Parish compliance with State and Archdiocese youth safety policies is a moral and ethical responsibility, as well as a fiduciary one. The Archdiocese policy simply focuses on protecting our youth. It contains a background check and training for anyone involved in ministry with our youth. Currently our parishes in the Metropolis have a very low compliance level. Dn. Justin emphasized the importance of our parishes becoming compliant as soon as possible. From a legal perspective, it is possible that if there is a claim in a parish and the parish is not 100 percent compliant, the parish may not be protected by the insurance company. In this case, if found liable, a parish would need to pay out of pocket. So it's a a serious financial and legal risk to not be compliant. These policies apply to our parish camps as well. In California Statue AB506 now requires Livescan background checks. This may include churches but it is still vague. Some insurance companies say that it does. This is another reason for our parishes in CA to get compliant asap. Claims will be filed with the Metropolis and if one parish is not compliant, the Metropolis would not be compliant. Deacon Justin will be following up with parishes to help them get compliant. Deacon Justin responded to several questions. There were good follow-up questions and discussions.

#### **Hellenic College Holy Cross**

**President George Cantonis**

President Cantonis shared a promotional video about the school, and then spoke about the school, emphasizing the importance of the school for the future of our Church. It trains priests, it prepares Orthodox academics, and it educates undergraduate students. George reviewed many of the financial, staff and academic challenges of the school of recent years, and then reviewed the

tremendous amount of progress that has been made in a few short years. Expenses have been reduced and many new young staff have been hired. New programs like the Semester of Faith have been added. All professors now have a PhD, with 40 percent of them from Harvard, Yale, or Princeton. The school has maintained its accreditation and will soon offer an online master degree in theology. The quality of students entering Holy Cross and Hellenic College is excellent. The school has a beautiful campus. The school has so much potential but it needs the support of the faithful to realize it. George thanked many individuals from the Metropolis of San Francisco that have helped the school so much. He thanked Mrs. Jeannie Ranglas for the support Philoptochos provides its students; His Eminence for his constant support and counsel about the school; Fr. Jon Magoulas for his commitment, counsel and support for the school; Dr. Diana Demetrulias, VP of Academic Affairs, for working tirelessly on Academic Accreditation; Fr. Chris Flesoras, Assistant Dean of Students, who has helped rebuild the Office of Student Life; Fr. Nick Metrakos who after graduation created a Department of Institutional Research; and Anna Teodosiadis, one of the first local School Representatives. The Metropolis has been invaluable in helping the school progress so quickly in such a short amount of time. His Eminence thanked George for everything he has accomplished for the school and therefore the Church. George responded to several questions.

### **Family Wellness Ministry Presentation**

Presvytera Patricia Tsagalakis made a very brief presentation on the work of the Metropolis Family Wellness Ministry, commenting on the successful work they have been doing with their online “Eights Dates” ministry. In two years, the ministry has reached over 400 couples. The goal is to bring this ministry to every parish in-person.

### **Approval of Minutes 2021 Clergy-Laity Assembly**

A motion to approve the minutes of 2021 CLA was made by John Karas. A second was made by Rajai Akkawi. A poll was placed on Zoom. The motion passed.

### **Metropolis Council Report**

### **Theofanis Economidis and Isidoros Garifalakis**

Fanis expressed his gratitude for everyone’s participation. The Metropolis Council is present to serve the Metropolis. Fanis has served on the Council for over 30 years. Because of health challenges he has had to take a break from his participation but he looks forward to contributing again. In the meantime, he thanked Isidoros Garifalakis for assuming some of his responsibilities.

Isidoros thanked Fanis for his trust and support, and offered a brief report on behalf of the Metropolis Council. The Metropolis Council serves the Metropolis, but everyone needs to give of the time, treasure and talents to help the Metropolis. The improvements in infrastructure at the Ranch are a result of the assistance of the faithful. Isidoros is amazed at what has been accomplished in the last 18 years in the Metropolis under Metropolitan Gerasimos. The theme of the Assembly is a challenge for all of us to work together for our Metropolis. We can accomplish much more if we work together.

## **Election of Metropolis Council and Archdiocesan Council Members**

**His Grace Bishop Ioannis**

The election for 8 lay individuals and 8 clergy to the Metropolis Council took place. The following individuals were on the ballot:

Spiro Beckas  
Hon. (Ret.) Connie Contes  
Hon. Steven Counelis  
Chris Kalabokes  
Bill Marutsos  
George Psefteas  
Dionysios “Dio” Stefanopoulos  
Michael Syrengelas  
Dr. Eve Tibbs  
Demosthenis “Demo” Zeppos

Rev. Andrew Barakos  
Reve Nikolaos Bekris  
Rev. Justin Bosl  
Rev. Dean Kouldukis  
Rev. Peter Salmas  
Rev. Panagiotis Sotiras  
Rev. Peter Stratos  
Rev. Tom Zaferes

Members of the Assembly were asked to vote. (Vote tabulations were not completed before the end of the Assembly.)

One clergyman and two lay individuals were also elected to the Archdiocesan Council by acclimation: Rev. Andrew Barakos, Isidoros Garifalakis and George Psefteas.

## **Financial Report: Year-End 2021**

**Michael Syrengelas**

### *Operational P&L*

Michael reported that overall most of the line items were in line with budgeted amounts. There were only a couple of lines that were significantly different. The Archdiocese Allotment came in a little higher than expected. The Archdiocese Total Commitment Sharing shows a zero in 2021 because the funds were received in 2022. Unrestricted donations came in approximately \$50,000 over budget. Metropolis Ministries are funded in part by self-funding and also from the restricted “Gala” funds. Total revenue was \$2,258,313. Total expenses were \$2,276,657. Patriarchal gifts exceeded budget because the Patriarchate asked for assistance for the Metropolises of Korea, and Imvros and Tenedos, and the Metropolis assisted. Overall expenses exceeded revenue by \$18,344 so very close to breakeven for 2021.

### *Balance Sheet (Statement of Financial Position)*



At the end of 2021, net assets increased. The largest decrease in restricted funds was in the “Gala” account. This account funds our ministries but the Metropolis has not had a Gala because of covid for over two years. The Ranch has also had a large decrease in restricted funds because of a decrease in business due to covid. The Metropolis House was again added to the Metropolis balance sheet at historical cost and depreciation at \$22,000.00. Total net assets are lower approximately \$250,000. There is \$147,325 in payable to Archdiocese. This is for salaries at the Ranch, which are a passthrough, as well as some surplus PPE funds the Metropolis needs to return to the Archdiocese. The net income for 2021 is a negative \$352,879. It’s important to note the timing of some funds coming into the Metropolis, and that 2021 expenses were higher for reasons mentioned (related to covid). George Psefteas reassured the large “loss” in 2021 is understandable. In 2020 the Metropolis raised \$330,000 for its Covid Relief Fund but did not have this income in 2021. In 2021 the Metropolis tried to assist its parishes because of the pandemic. Payroll and gifts were a little higher in 2021, and the Young Adult Conferences expenses added to overall expenses. And income was lower in 2021 as the TC benefit of \$79,000 was received in 2020 and not 2021. These events give the 2021 loss some context.

A motion made by Philip Athanasiades to accept the 2021 financial report. Mary Pruitt made a second. No discussion. The motion was voted on and passed.

## **Financial Presentation 2022**

### **Total Commitment**

**Philippos Athanasiades**

Philippos reported that the Metropolis again fulfilled its commitment to the Archdiocese. Several parishes have already taken advantage of the 2 percent discount for prepayment. We had 55 out of 59 parishes fulfill their commitment, which is excellent. Forms to submit financial information will be sent to parishes soon. The Archdiocese will soon host a video training on how to correctly fill out these forms and treasurers were encouraged to attend.

### **2022 Metropolis Budget**

**George Psefteas**

The budget will be voted on by the Assembly. The Archdiocese Allotment income to the Metropolis has been reduced a very small amount to allow for additional funding for the pension benefit funding. This was agreed upon at the 2020 Congress. The Metropolis does follow a zero-based budgeting approach. It looks at all anticipated expenses and then it builds the budget to breakeven. We have fixed income amounts from the Archdiocese and a variable amount in Faith Forward. Our operating budget for 2022 is slightly less than 2021. Some unrestricted ministries have been moved to restricted. The big increase in restricted ministries number is due to adding two of our larger ministries to this category. Travel and lodging are increased hoping travel will increase post-pandemic. Administrative expenses are in line with projected income of \$1,350,000. This is essentially the operational budget of the Metropolis. The budget has a new line item, Metropolis Ministries Funding Support, for \$30,000. This is to give our ministries an overall buffer if any faces a shortfall in their budget. Missions and Evangelism and the YAL Conference are now in the restricted ministries. FDF and Church Music budgets have been added to the Metropolis budget for visibility. Total budget for 2022 is \$3,500,000 and is broken into three

sections. Operations is approximately \$1,350,000, unrestricted ministries that are partly self-funded is \$426,829 and restricted ministries that are self-funded is \$1,554,730.

Philip Athanasiades made a motion to accept the budget as presented. Second by John Krras. The motion was voted on by the Assembly and passed.

### **Review Engagement**

**George Psefteas and Rev. Father Tom Zaferes**

The engagement is with MD Sassi Company in San Francisco. This is one step below an audit. George has been working with the auditor for over a year to help him understand the Metropolis financials. This effort is taking longer than anticipated because we were informed that FDF and the Ranch must be included in this engagement as they fall under the responsibility of the Metropolis. In one month, the review of 2019 and 2020 should be completed, then 2021 will be reviewed. Fr. Tom commented the good news is that no major problems have surfaced so the Metropolis has been doing a good job with its accounting. As a result of this engagement the future yearly review of Metropolis financials will go much smoother and quicker. It's a very positive thing that the Metropolis will now have this level of accountability and visibility moving forward.

A motion was made by Fr. Michael Tervo to accept the report of the Audit Committee. Second by Alex Falls. Motion to accept the report passed.

### **Election of two members for Audit Committee**

**Rev. Father Tom Zaferes**

John Karas is one nominee for the committee. Fr. Steve Tussing was nominated and he accepted. The motion for John and Fr. Steve to be members of the committee passed by acclamation.

### **New Business**

His Eminence asked everyone to reflect on the importance of Hellenic College Holy Cross for our Church. His Eminence appealed to everyone to make it a priority to look out for young people that are interested in learning more about their faith and studying for the priesthood. Our faithful should also consider making a "pilgrimage" to visit the school to learn more about it. His Eminence also commented that we need to give thanks to God for everything He has given us and keep him in the center of our discussions. We must always be mindful of the mercy, forgiveness and the love of God in our lives. His Eminence thanked Deacon Justin for his assistance today for guiding the discussions in a good way. His Eminence is sure this meeting will provide good fruit for the Metropolis. The Metropolis is not an organization or institution, it is all of the faithful of the organic Church. His Eminence encouraged everyone to read the materials of the Assembly and apply this information in their parishes, for the glory of God's name.

### **Benediction and Adjournment**

**His Eminence Metropolitan Gerasimos**

His Eminence closed the Assembly with prayer.