

Bylaws of the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh  
and Western Pennsylvania  
Orthodox Church in America



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*Preamble*

These Bylaws are established for the governance of the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania, a territorial diocese of the Orthodox Church in America ("the OCA"), which is the local autocephalous Orthodox Church belonging to the worldwide communion of Orthodox Churches.<sup>1</sup> The Orthodox Church in general, the OCA, and the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania ("the Diocese") are hierarchical in structure. The Primate of the Orthodox Church in America ("the Metropolitan") is the Archbishop of Washington and Metropolitan of All America and Canada. The ruling hierarch of the Diocese is the Bishop of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania ("the Diocesan Bishop"), canonically elected, installed, and recognized by the Holy Synod of Bishops of the OCA.

The Diocese is governed by Holy Tradition, that is, the whole body of teaching and practice of the One, Holy, Orthodox, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. That Tradition is expressed first of all in Holy Scripture; in the dogmatic decisions and canons of the seven Ecumenical Councils, the canons of the local councils, the canons and writings of the Holy Fathers; in the liturgical life of the Church; in the Statute of the OCA ("the Statute") as it presently exists or may hereafter be properly amended<sup>2</sup>; and in these Bylaws. The purpose of the regulations contained in these Bylaws is to apply Holy Tradition to the organization and daily life of the Diocese.

The Bylaws consist of this Preamble and the twelve Articles which follow.

### **Article I – The Diocese**

The Diocese is the basic Church body which unites parishes and institutions, usually in a defined geographical area, under the authority of the Diocesan Bishop. He governs with the assistance of the Diocesan Assembly and the Diocesan Council. For purposes of these Bylaws, the Diocesan Bishop, the

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<sup>1</sup>The OCA unites in its fold Orthodox Christians of various national backgrounds and traditions. It grew from the Alaskan mission established in 1794 by the Church of Russia. Expanding across the United States and Canada, it became a Diocese of that Church. In 1924 this Diocese was reorganized as an autonomous Metropolitanate under the title "the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America." On April 10, 1970, the Patriarch and the Holy Synod of the Church of Russia granted autocephaly to the Metropolitanate. The Metropolitanate accepted and affirmed its new status and reorganized under the title "The Orthodox Church in America" at sessions of the All-American Council held in October, 1970, at Saint Tikhon's Monastery in South Canaan, Pennsylvania." From the Preamble to the Statute of the OCA

<sup>2</sup>All references in these Bylaws to "the Statute of the OCA" shall be understood to mean "the Statute of the OCA as it presently exists or may hereafter be properly amended."

Diocesan Council and the Diocesan Assembly, each acting in its proper capacity, shall constitute the Diocesan Administration ("the Administration").

## **Article II - The Diocesan Bishop**

### Section 1: Definition

The Diocese is governed by the Diocesan Bishop who, by virtue of his canonical election by the Holy Synod of the OCA and episcopal consecration, possesses full hierarchical and canonical authority within the Diocese, in accord with the holy canons and the provisions of Article VIII, Sections 1 and 2 of the Statute of the OCA. 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 of the OCA.

### 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 the 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 the Diocese;
- d. Consecrate churches and chapels, erect permanent altars, and consecrate and provide Holy Antimensia within the 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 the 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;
- 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;
- k. Appoint or confirm Diocesan Officers, as provided in these Bylaws, and maintain general oversight of and bear general responsibility for the efficient administration of the Diocese;

- l. Ordain qualified graduates of Orthodox seminaries to the priesthood and diaconate as well as lower clergy for the Diocese;
- m. Ordain candidates to the priesthood and diaconate for the Diocese otherwise qualified, with the approval of the Holy Synod;
- n. Appoint, transfer, remove, and grant retirement to parish clergy of the 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 of the OCA 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 the 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 the 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
- v. Establish diocesan educational or philanthropic institutions according to the needs of the 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.

### 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.

### 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 these 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

The qualifications for the Diocesan Bishop are set forth in Article VIII, Section 6 of the Statute of the OCA.

#### 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 new Diocesan Bishop shall be nominated and elected in the following manner. In consultation with the Locum Tenens and the Holy Synod, the Diocesan Council shall establish a schedule and any additional necessary procedures for the nomination of a Diocesan Bishop. The Diocesan Council shall serve as a committee to identify and interview candidates for the office, while encouraging communication with, and participation by, the members of the Diocese, including the submission of names of potential candidates. If not already a bishop, a candidate for the office of Diocesan Bishop must fulfill the canonical, moral, and educational requirements outlined in Article VIII, Section 6 of the Statute of the OCA. The Diocesan Council may not consider a candidate who is already ruling Bishop of another diocese.
- d. The Diocesan Council shall complete its work within a reasonable period of time, and, if possible, within one year of the date that the vacancy occurred. At the conclusion of its work, in consultation with the Locum Tenens, the Diocesan Council shall convene a Diocesan Assembly solely for the purpose of nominating a Diocesan Bishop, in accordance with Article VIII, Section 7 of the Statute of the OCA. Parishes and clergy shall be given at least sixty (60) days notice of the date of the Assembly. The notice shall include the names of the candidates the Diocesan Council shall present to the Assembly to be considered for nomination. The Locum Tenens shall preside at

the Assembly, and shall appoint clergy and lay Vice-Chairmen, a Secretary for the Assembly, and sufficient tellers to count the votes under the Secretary's supervision.

- e. The nomination shall take place according to the following order:
  - i. The Diocesan Chancellor, on behalf of the Diocesan Council, shall present the names of the Council's proposed candidates to the Assembly. There shall be no debate or discussion of proposed candidates.
  - ii. A blank paper ballot shall be distributed to each voting member of the Assembly, and the voters shall write one name and one name only on the ballot. Any ballot with more than one name shall be declared invalid, and the tellers shall not count it.
  - iii. If a candidate receives an absolute majority (more than fifty percent) of the total number of voting members in attendance at the Assembly, he shall be declared the nominee and his name shall be submitted to the Holy Synod for its approval and canonical election.
  - iv. If no candidate receives a majority on the first ballot, a second vote shall be taken. The candidates shall be the two candidates who received the highest number of votes on the first ballot. A blank paper ballot shall be distributed to each voting member of the Assembly, and the voters shall write one name and one name only on the ballot. Any ballot with more than one name, or any blank ballot, shall be declared invalid, and the tellers shall not count it. Any ballot which contains a name other than that of one of the two highest candidates from the first ballot shall also be invalid and shall not be counted. The candidate who receives a majority of the valid votes on the second ballot shall be declared the nominee, and his name shall be submitted to the Holy Synod for its approval and canonical election. In case of a tie, both names shall be submitted to the Holy Synod.
  - v. 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, in accord with Article VIII, Section 7 of the Statute of the OCA.
  - vi. Upon approval and canonical election by the Holy Synod, the date and location of the episcopal consecration of the candidate, if he is not already a bishop, and his installation shall be determined by the Holy Synod, in consultation with the Locum Tenens and the Diocesan Council.

#### 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 the 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 the Diocese.

### **ARTICLE III - 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;
- 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;
- e. One lay delegate from each parish not having a priest;
- f. The members of the Diocesan Council and the members of the 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;
- 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, with the permission of the Diocesan Bishop, 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.

### Section 3: Periodicity

- a. The Diocesan Assembly shall be convened at least once each calendar year. 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.
- 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 of the Statute of the OCA.

### 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 Diocesan Assembly, nominate a candidate for that office to the Holy Synod, in accordance with Article VIII, Section 7 of the Statute of the OCA;
- h. Elect the members of the Diocesan Council and Auditing Committee as provided in these Bylaws;
- I. Elect diocesan representatives and alternates to the Metropolitan Council as provided in Article V, Section 2 of the Statute of the OCA; and
- 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 Councils and all financial obligations determined by previous Diocesan Assemblies is entitled to representation, as outlined in Section 2 of this Article.

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

## 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 these Bylaws and the Parish Bylaws;
- b. Be a parishioner in accordance with Article XII, Section 5 of the Statute of the OCA;
- c. The elected delegates shall be accredited to the Assembly in accord with procedures and documentation established by the Diocesan Administration; and
- d. The parish priest shall submit the proper documentation to the Diocesan Administration. 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.

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

#### Section 12: Secretariat

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

#### 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 Diocesan Bishop, shall be published and distributed.

#### 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.

#### 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 these Bylaws.
- b. All resolutions and other decisions of the Diocesan Assembly shall be approved by majority vote, unless otherwise required by these Bylaws.

#### 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 of the Statute of the OCA and in these Bylaws.

## **ARTICLE IV - 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 the Diocesan Bishop; any and all Auxiliary Bishops; the Diocesan Chancellor, Secretary, and Treasurer; the clergy and lay representatives elected by the Diocesan Assembly to the Metropolitan Council; the Deans of the several deaneries; the Dean of the Cathedral; one lay representative from each deanery elected to a three-year term at a Diocesan Assembly; and one priest or deacon and one lay person elected "at large" to three-year terms at each Diocesan Assembly. The Diocesan Bishop may also appoint consultants as members of the Diocesan Council, with the right to participate in the discussions and make motions, but without the right to vote. The Diocesan Bishop shall chair the Diocesan Council, but he may delegate that function to an Auxiliary Bishop, to the Diocesan Chancellor, or to other Council members for various parts of meetings.

Clergy and lay members of the Diocesan Council elected "at large" at each Diocesan Assembly should be accredited delegates present at the Diocesan Assembly at which they are elected, unless their absence is otherwise blessed by the Diocesan Bishop.

The lay members of the Diocesan Council elected from the deaneries should be accredited delegates present at the Diocesan Assembly at which they are elected, unless their absence is otherwise blessed by the Diocesan Bishop. At a time designated by the agenda of the Assembly, the clergy and lay delegates shall caucus by deaneries. Each deanery's delegates shall elect by majority vote from among its lay representatives who will serve on the Diocesan Council.

Should the lay representative from a deanery resign or otherwise be unable to continue to fulfill the functions of the office, the Dean shall appoint a replacement who shall serve until completion of the three-year term.

### Section 3: Competence of the Diocesan Council

The following 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;

- 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 these 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.

The actions of the Diocesan Council shall become effective upon approval by the Diocesan Bishop.

#### Section 4: Periodicity

- a. The Diocesan Council shall meet regularly at least four times each year to conduct business, at times to be determined by the Diocesan Bishop in consultation with the Diocesan Council. Meetings may be conducted in person, or by telephone or web conferencing.
- b. Special meetings of the Diocesan Council may be called by the Diocesan Bishop, or at the written request of a majority of the Council conveyed to the Diocesan Chancellor.
- c. At least two weeks prior to such meetings, notice by regular or electronic mail shall be given to all Council members.

#### Section 5: Quorum and Voting

A majority of members shall constitute a quorum of the Diocesan Council for the conduct of business. All decisions of the Diocesan Council shall be by majority vote of the members present. However, if a special

meeting cannot be scheduled with a quorum in time to address an issue, a vote of members of the Diocesan Council may be conducted at the direction of the Diocesan Bishop by either regular or electronic mail, or by telephonic or other electronic means. The Diocesan Secretary shall collect and compile the results from the members, report them to all the members, and record the results in the minutes of the next Diocesan Council meeting.

Members of the Diocesan Council who move outside the territorial boundaries of the Diocese, and representatives of the deaneries who move outside the territorial boundaries of their deaneries, are deemed, by that fact alone, to have resigned from the Diocesan Council. The Diocesan Bishop may remove from office members of the Council found to be in heresy or in serious and manifest violation of Christian morals and ethics. In such cases, the Diocesan Bishop's decision shall be final, except insofar as appeal is permitted by the holy canons or the Statute of the OCA.

#### Section 6: Departments and Committees

The Diocesan Council may establish departments or committees for specific purposes and activities, according to the needs of the Diocese, as it deems necessary and proper. Members of such departments or committees need not be members of the Diocesan Council. Department and committee chairs may attend Diocesan Council meetings at which their activities are discussed, without the right to vote. Appointment of all departments and committees and their chairs shall be made by the Diocesan Bishop.

### **Article V - The Diocesan Administration and Officers**

By virtue of his office, the Diocesan Bishop is the chief administrative officer of the Diocese in both spiritual and secular affairs. Nothing may be done without his knowledge, approval and blessing. No action of any diocesan committee, official body, or organization is valid without his approval.

The Diocesan Officers, the Diocesan Assembly, and the Diocesan Council, acting under the supervision and authority and with the blessing of the Diocesan Bishop, shall constitute the Diocesan Administration for purposes of these Bylaws.

The Diocesan Administration in all its actions is subject to the Holy Tradition and the canon law of the Orthodox Church, and to the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America, any provision of these Bylaws to the contrary notwithstanding. In the event of conflict, the decision of the Holy Synod of the OCA shall prevail.

The Diocesan Officers shall be the Chancellor, Secretary, and Treasurer.

#### Section 1: The Diocesan Chancellor

The Diocesan Chancellor shall act as a liaison between the Diocesan Bishop and deans, clergy, parishes and diocesan officers, and departments and committees. He is responsible for implementing the decisions

of the Bishop, Diocesan Assembly, Diocesan Council, and any departments and committees. He coordinates operation of the Chancery office and, together with the Bishop, is responsible for administration of the Diocese. He shall be appointed by the Diocesan Bishop and shall serve at his pleasure.

#### Section 2: The Diocesan Secretary

The Diocesan Secretary shall be responsible for maintaining the records of the Diocese. The Secretary shall perform the duties of the office under the direction of the Diocesan Bishop and the Chancellor. The Secretary shall be appointed by the Diocesan Bishop and shall serve at his pleasure.

The Diocesan Secretary shall:

- a. Compile and preserve the official minutes of the Diocesan Council and the Diocesan Assembly;
- b. Notify in a timely fashion the parishes, and the members of the Diocesan Council and of the Diocesan Assembly of upcoming meetings;
- c. Perform such other duties as the Diocesan Bishop or the Chancellor shall direct.

#### Section 3: The Diocesan Treasurer

The Diocesan Treasurer shall serve as the chief financial officer of the Diocese. The Treasurer shall perform the duties of office under the direction of the Diocesan Bishop, in coordination with the Chancellor. The Treasurer shall be appointed by the Diocesan Bishop and shall serve at his pleasure.

The Treasurer shall:

- a. Be responsible for the collection, safekeeping, and disbursement of all diocesan funds;
- b. Be responsible for the timely deposit and investment of diocesan financial assets, with the blessing of the Diocesan Bishop, in consultation with the Chancellor and Diocesan Council, and shall report all such dispositions to the Diocesan Council;
- c. Maintain in conformity with standard accounting procedures timely, accurate, and complete records of all financial activities, and an inventory of all diocesan properties;
- d. Provide to each meeting of the Diocesan Council and the Diocesan Assembly a complete statement of the current financial position of the Diocese, and a summary of receipts and expenditures compared to budget for the current fiscal year to date.

#### Section 4: The Auditing Committee

The Auditing Committee shall be composed of three members, one clergy and two lay, elected annually by the Diocesan Assembly. They should have accounting or bookkeeping experience, where feasible.

The Auditing Committee shall:

- a. Perform the annual internal audit of the financial records of the Diocese;
- b. Perform an annual audit of the financial records of all committees of the Diocesan Council and all auxiliary diocesan organizations;

- c. Review the scope of any audit to be performed by an external auditor;
- d. Discuss the results of an external audit with the external auditor and establish a plan for the implementation of any recommendations provided by the external auditor, to be submitted to the Diocesan Council.

#### Section 5: The Diocesan Administration Generally

The Diocesan Council may authorize the employment of such office assistants and staff to aid the Diocesan Bishop, Chancellor, Secretary, and Treasurer as may be necessary for the efficient operation of the diocesan office. Staff personnel shall be hired and dismissed by their immediate supervisor with the approval of the Diocesan Bishop.

The execution of contracts shall require two signatures: that of the Diocesan Bishop and of the Diocesan Chancellor, Secretary, or Treasurer.

All financial accounts and records and all minutes of meetings and other records of the Diocese are and always remain property of the Diocese, and shall be maintained at the Diocesan Center. Financial records are open to inspection by qualified persons as provided by the relevant Federal and Pennsylvania statutes governing non-profit religious corporations.

For purposes of these Bylaws, all notifications of meetings or other necessary written communications required of the Diocesan Secretary or any other officer of the Diocese may be made by U.S. Mail or comparable services, or by electronic means.

### **Article VI - The Deanery**

#### Section 1: Definition

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

#### Section 2: The Dean

The Dean is a priest who heads a deanery. He assists the Diocesan Bishop in the administration of the Deanery. The Dean shall be appointed by the Diocesan Bishop from among the parish priests of the Deanery in consultation with Deanery clergy.

#### Section 3: Competence of the Dean

Under the direction of the Diocesan Bishop, the Dean shall have the responsibility of leading the life of the Deanery, in consultation with the priests of the Deanery. He shall be the first instance of appeal when disputes arise within parishes. The Dean shall:

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

## **Article VII - 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 this 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 this 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.
- 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, this Statute and this Article in particular apply to chapels insofar as they are appropriate to their situation.

### 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 this 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 this 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 consistent with the provisions of this 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 have canonical oversight over all cemeteries and parish properties; and
  - 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.
- 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 Bishop.

#### Section 4: Other Parish Clergy

- a. An associate priest is a priest who has been appointed to a parish by the 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 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 as 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.

#### 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.

#### 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 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.
- 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 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 in that current year.
- 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. Should there be a question whether an action of a Parish Assembly is valid or lawful under this 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

- 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 is 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 VIII - Monasticism**

### Section 1: Definition

- a. A monastery is a local Orthodox Eucharistic community of men or women who have willingly chosen to live the monastic life and which functions under the immediate canonical supervision and pastoral care of the Diocesan Bishop, who is the canonical and spiritual leader of the monastery. Unless otherwise specified, the term monastery refers to and includes monasteries, monastic communities, sketes, metochia, and cells.
- b. The Diocesan Bishop shall be the canonical and spiritual leader of all diocesan monasteries within his Diocese.
- c. The organization of monastic life and administration of the monasteries are subject to the Sacred Canons, the Statute of the OCA, regulations for monasteries and monasticism as developed by the Holy Synod, these Bylaws, where applicable, and the monastery's own statutes or bylaws approved by the Bishop, in consultation with the Holy Synod. The Orthodox Church in general and the Orthodox Church in America in particular are hierarchical in structure.

### Section 2: Governance

The Diocesan Administration will establish regulations for the general governance of diocesan monasteries.

## **Article IX - Provisions Regarding Civil Law**

1. For purposes of civil law, the Diocese is a non-profit religious corporation, created by filing an Application for Registration of Name for a Nonprofit Corporation with the Secretary of the Commonwealth for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and subject to the applicable provisions of the statutes of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the United States Internal Revenue Code, Section 501(c)(3).
2. The Diocese may do and perform any and all actions permitted to a non-profit corporation by the applicable statutes of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and by the United States Internal Revenue Code, including the distribution of funds and other assets to other Section 501(c)(3) corporations.
3. For purposes of civil law, the Diocesan Bishop shall be the president, the Diocesan Secretary, or such other officer as the Diocesan Bishop may direct, shall be the secretary, and the Diocesan Council shall be the board of directors of the corporation.

4. The principal office of the Diocese is located at 8641 Peters Road, Cranberry Township, Pennsylvania 16066, or such other place as may be designated by the Diocesan Bishop.

#### **Article X- General Provisions**

1. The geographical area of the Diocese is defined by the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America. All parishes, missions, mission stations, chapels, and institutions of the OCA within that area are under the jurisdiction of the Diocese, except those assigned by the Holy Synod to non-geographical dioceses of the OCA or designated stavropegial.
2. Diocesan organizations may be established by the Diocesan Bishop. Any organization using the name of the Diocese shall submit an annual report of its activities and financial situation to the Diocesan Administration.
3. The Diocesan Bishop may charter and establish pastoral schools and seminaries for the education of clergy in accord with the needs of the Diocese. These schools shall have such affiliations and accreditations as shall best enable them to fulfill their purpose.
4. Should the Diocese ever be divided into two or more dioceses, or merged with an existing diocese, a Diocesan Assembly shall provide for the distribution of the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania's assets and liabilities in a reasonable and equitable manner, and in a manner consistent with the provisions of Section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code, on the recommendation of the Diocesan Council.
5. If the Diocese is dissolved or ceases to exist, and is not merged with another Diocese of the OCA, then all assets held in the name of the Diocese shall become the property of the Orthodox Church in America, a non-profit corporation under the provisions of Section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code.
6. The financial support for the Diocese shall be determined by the Diocesan Council, with the approval of the annual Diocesan Assembly. Giving as a proportion of income is the basis of Orthodox Christian stewardship, and is encouraged at all levels of diocesan life - by the individual to his or her Parish, by the Parish to the Diocese, and by the Diocese to the Central Church Administration.

#### **Article XI- Amendments**

1. Amendments to these Bylaws may be proposed by the Diocesan Council on its own initiative, or by petition of an annual meeting of a Parish. After review by the Diocesan Bishop, a proposed amendment may be submitted to the next Diocesan Assembly for a vote. Notice and the text of the proposed amendment shall be mailed or electronically transmitted to all parishes at least sixty (60) days before the Assembly.

2. Approval by a two-thirds vote of the Diocesan Assembly shall be necessary for ratification of the proposed amendment.

### **Article XII - Adoption**

These Bylaws were enacted on November 5, 2016, as approved by the Archdiocesan Assembly of the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania at New Salem, PA.

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The Most Reverend MELCHISEDEK  
Archbishop of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania

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Archpriest William J. Evansky  
Chancellor  
Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania

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Archpriest Michael Senyo  
Archdiocesan Council Secretary  
Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania