21/10/2024

Archdiocesan Council Convenes in New York



New York – On Friday, October 18, 2024, Archdiocesan Council members convened for the first meeting of the 2024-2026 term at the Archdiocesan Cathedral in New York. His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America presided over the meeting and administered the Oath of Office to all members. He also nominated the following as Officers for the Executive Committee of the Council: Vice-Chairman John Catsimatidis, Treasurer Elaine Allen, and Secretary Nicholas Karacostas. The new Officers were approved by the members. Metropolitans attending the Council meeting were Their Eminences Methodios, Gerasimos, Savas, Nathanael, Apostolos and Constantine.

In his opening remarks, the Archbishop noted the upcoming Athenagoras Human Rights Banquet honoring Yulia Navalnaya, and in her person, her late husband Alexei, martyred by the Putin regime, by saying, "… as Orthodox Christians, and particularly the leaders of the Church seeded throughout the Sacred Archdiocese of America, we can never lose sight of the global implications of our Church life here in America. Yes, we are here to handle and manage the business of the Archdiocese, and to manifest the responsibility and accountability that the Faithful merit. But we are also here to bear witness to the Faith. What that means for each of us individually is one thing – faith is a personal matter and should be respected. Nevertheless, we have a duty to call out injustice and immorality wherever we see it, because as clergy and laity together, we share the prophetic burden of the Church."

Following His Eminence's remarks, Secretary of the Council Nicholas Karacostas gave a report on the work of the Executive Committee, Chief Information Officer of the Archdiocese Theo Nicolakis gave a review of the roles, responsibilities and the opportunities for engagement by the members of the Council and Legal Counsel George Tsougarakis gave his report, reminding the new members of their legal and fiduciary responsibilities and reviewing a number of current legal issues.

Treasurer Elaine Allen spoke at length about the finances of the Archdiocese and reported on the positive financial progress of three different priorities of the Archdiocese – Hellenic College Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, the

Clergy Pension and St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine. She also gave updates on St. Michael's Home, St. Demetrios Cathedral in Astoria and the activities of our captive insurance company to benefit the Metropolises and in the future the parishes. She also reported that the Archdiocese is on target for budget expectations. She thanked the following for their financial support of the ministries of the Archdiocese: Leadership 100, the Nicholas J. and Anna K. Bouras Foundation, the Stavros Niarchos Foundation and the Lilly Endowment. She also reported on the recent disaster relief funds – Greek Fire Relief Fund and the Hurricane Relief Fund. Chairman of the Finance Committee Lou Kircos gave a detailed presentation on the successful program for funding benefits for the clergy, and thoroughly reviewed the budgets of the Archdiocese. He reported that a balanced budget has been recently recommended by the Finance Committee and approved by the Executive Committee in accordance with the resolution passed at the Clergy-Laity Congress in July. (2025-2026 Adopted Budget here)

Also reporting was Dr. Demetrios Katos, President of Hellenic College Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, who spoke on the progress of the school, offering a presentation on the programs offered in-person and on-line for the students and for anyone interested in furthering their Orthodox education and the key initiatives for the future.

Other reports included an update on the self-funding plan of the Orthodox Health Plan for clergy offered by Chair of the Insurance Sub-Committee of the Archdiocesan Benefits Committee Fr. Simon Thomas; and review of the new St. Michael's Home facility by Director Bishop Andonios of Phasiane; the continuing support of the Leadership 100 Endowment Fund by Chairman Demetrios Logothetis, and a review of the work of the Holy Eparchial Synod by Chief Secretary Bishop Athenagoras of Nazianzos.

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