

Archdiocesan Council Begins the 2020-2022 Term



New York, NY – Archbishop Elpidophoros convened the new Archdiocesan Council that will last until the 2022 Clergy Laity Congress. Just prior to the meeting, the Archbishop addressed the newly established “Senators for Orthodoxy and Hellenism,” a special new organization that brings together clergy and laity from around the Archdiocese with tremendous expertise and institutional memory.

In his Keynote Address to the Archdiocesan Council, Archbishop Elpidophoros reminded the Council:

“We have been forced to face unprecedented challenges in the present, even as we were working assiduously to ameliorate challenges from the past. And the fact that we have been so successful is a brilliant testament to the historic levels of cooperation and dedicated service that you have all given to this Eparchy of the First Throne of Orthodoxy, our Ecumenical Patriarchate.” (full text found at <https://www.goarch.org/-/address-archdiocesancouncil-fall-2020>)

The results of today’s Council included the following:

- Passing a balanced budget that reflects the ongoing commitment to responsible use of the funds entrusted by the Faithful,

- an update from Archbishop Elpidophoros on the work towards a new Charter, emphasizing cooperation of the Archdiocese with the Ecumenical Patriarchate and reiterating the fact that until the Charter is approved, the operational structures of the Church continue,
- a detailed presentation by HCHC President George Cantonis demonstrating that even through the pandemic, the School is on a path towards stability and growth,
the Archdiocese, Archdiocese Benefits Committee and the Archdiocese Presbyters Council have been working cooperatively come up with a fundraising solution that is acceptable to all parties and will secure the future of our clergy,
- a report that demonstrated that the Saint Nicholas Church and National Shrine at the World Trade Center is on schedule for completion of construction in the Fall of 2021,
- a report from the Youth Office on the work of the department, especially in light of the pandemic, which included the re-introduction of the popular web series, Be the Bee.

The Archbishop concluded the Council with this exhortation:

“I am very proud to say that our people – the Greek Orthodox People of America – have not wavered in their faith in God and in the Church during this crisis. But the entirety of society has suffered shortfalls of confidence during this most difficult year. We can measure it in the economy, in the political discourse, in the appearance of extremism and conspiracy theories that are usually hidden from view, and are now coming out into the information highways and sometimes out into the very streets of our cities and towns.

“Therefore, my beloved in Christ, let us take courage from what the Greek Orthodox Faithful have demonstrated this past year. We have weathered a harsh and severe storm that has cost us dearly – precious lives of families who are still grieving and who were often denied a last farewell from their loved ones because of the COVID restrictions. We have endured forced reductions in attendance at Divine Services, and substantial belt-tightening across the Archdiocese.

“But we have not lost our faith! We have not lost our purpose and our mission! Priests have found new ways to minister and the Archdiocese has adapted with new partnerships and expanded resources beyond the conventional. We have every reason to hope in the future, and for better days in 2021.”

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